





### **Publisher's Note.**

The italics in the book are not the author's. The publisher italicised certain passages in order to emphasize the points which bear resemblance to the prevailing political conditions in India.

These passages bear testimony to the author's political knowledge and foresight.

## FOREWORD.

"Self-abnegation in politics" by the late R. B. Lal Chand is a reprint of a pamphlet which was published in 1909 and contained a series of letters first published in the well known newspaper, "the Punjabee" of Lahore. Both the letters and the pamphlet were published anonymously. The letters shook the prevailing political philosophy of the time and if any writing can be said to be an event, "Self-abnegation in Politics" undoubtedly was. It was as a result of these letters that the Punjab Hindu Sabha was founded and Hindus awakened to the fate which awaited them. The Arya Smaj founded by the late Swami Dayananda Saraswati had infused life into the religious and social outlook of the Hindus. But the credit—if one man can claim it, of the political rehabilitation of the Hindus must go to the author of "Self-abnegation in politics."

If the warning sounded in these letters had been heeded to, there would have been little occasion for reprinting them. I was away from Lahore when these letters were first published and had no opportunity of reading them. Some fourteen years after there was another spell of activity on the part of the protagonists of the Hindu National Movement which owed its initial start to R. B. Lal Chand and at Benares the Hindu Sangathan Movement was re-organised. And it is noteworthy that these letters again supplied the philosophy and the purpose of that reorganisation. The Hindus of Lahore again began to

letters. But on account of some unfortunate circumstances, I could not lay my hands on the pamphlet even this time. The obscurity to which this remarkable and important pamphlet has been condemned is a telling commentary on the interest which Hindus take in their future. Eventually Mr. C. L. Mathur, Barrister-at-Law, supplied me with a copy of the pamphlet and I am grateful to him.

Between today and the first publication of this pamphlet lie nearly three decades of eventful history and frustrated hopes from the Hindu point of view. But R. B. Lal Chand might well have written these letters to-day. For there is not a word in them which does not apply to the existing situation : and, indeed, there can be no higher tribute than this to the wisdom and foresight of the author.

R. B. Lal Chand was born in 1852. He was educated at Government College, Lahore, and received his Master's degree in 1876. As a student R. B. Lal Chand won rare distinction and secured the coveted honour of being a Fuller's Exhibitioner of the Punjab University. In 1877 he joined the legal profession. He started practice at Allahabad but returned to Lahore a few years later. He became one of the first members of the Arya Smaj and till Swami Dayananda's death in 1884, when he formulated a scheme for founding the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College, he was little known. He became its first President and remained in that capacity for twenty years. In 1882 it was unthinkable that Indians could set up an educational institution, with an independent outlook and without help from the Government. Under the guidance and with the untiring industry of R. B. Lal Chand, the D. A. V. College not only grew up into an unrivalled national educational centre for the Hindus, but it also proved to be incontro-

terrible argument against the baseless taunt of the administration that Indians could not manage any affair of public importance.

In other spheres too R. B. Lal Chand did pioneer work. He founded the Punjab National Bank, the first bank in this country to run without foreign aid. In no mean measure has this Bank given that confidence to Indian Industry and commerce which is the source of livelihood of millions to-day.

At the Bar R. B. Lal Chand won conspicuous success and remained the leader of the Lahore Bar for many a year. He was one of the best legal heads of his time and officiated in a temporary vacancy as a judge of the Lahore High Court. He was passed over when a permanent vacancy occurred; but his refusal to accept a judgeship when it was later on offered to him shows the strength of R. B. Lal Chand's character and his independence.

To understand the genesis of the Hindu National Movement we must go back to 1909, the year of inauguration of the Minto-Morley reforms. In 1906 the Moslem League was established at Dacca and for the first time in British Indian History, communal representation for the Muslims found statutory enactment in the reforms of 1909. That year which future historians will consider as fateful in Indian history, saw the beginning of a policy of increasing disregard of Hindu interests by the Government and the disappearance of the feeling of unity on the part of Muslims with their Hindu countrymen. The Congress on that occasion, even as it does to-day, considered the attitude of the Muslims as a temporary phase in their political evolution. R. B. Lal Chand had the proud distinction of being the first in this country to foresee that it was not a phase that lasted nearly twenty years and the

of the Muslims is daily gaining ground. Can their be greater vindication of the point of view expressed so clearly and forcefully in these letters than the history of the past twenty years ? R. B Lal Chand discerned in the mist of political forces which surrounded him, the direction in which the Congress was drifting. He clearly perceived that although the Congress was mainly composed of Hindus, yet it strove, under a mistaken view of Muslim psychology, against Hindu interests. In politics it was a tragic act of self-abnegation on the part of the Hindus, and hence the title of these letters.

In 1911 at the first Hindu Conference held under the auspices of the Punjab Hindu Sabha, at Amritsar R. B. Lal Chand was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee. The Conference was attended by nearly every Hindu of importance in the Punjab and it was only during the war that the activities of the Hindu Sabha ceased.

In 1912 R. B. Lal Chand to whom the Hindus owe an incalculable debt of gratitude for the work he did for them and for the unfailing guidance he gave them, died.

The letters which follow this foreword are at once a political analysis of inescapable logic and a prophecy about the future of Hindus in this country. Few political polemics have stood the test of time as this one. The manner in which the predictions of R. B. Lal Chand have proved to be true is nothing short of uncanny. He went further than even the optimists in the Congress, and foresaw that the Congress Movement would sweep over the country. This was in 1909, when the Congress had hardly emerged out of the position of a debating society! Hindus controlled the Congress, even as they do now and they were like their followers today in that they had lost sympathy with the Hindu cause and Hindu needs. These men had read Indian history as they liked it to be. And R. B. Lal Chand warned the

Hindus against being led by the moving phrases of the Congress ideology which being untrue to the facts of the political situation in India was bound to rebound against them eventually.

To me these letters are of especial importance. For I have in my humble way preached the philosophy with a certain dauntless stubbornness. My voice has at times been drowned in the medley of Congress trumpets. The sacrifices of Congress Leaders have always been brought against my views as a clinching argument. There is no one who appreciates suffering more than I, having had a share of it, but I feel that mere suffering, unless it is directed against evil and is courted in pursuance of right principles is an act of unwisdom and not nobility of character. The man who stands on one leg for a score of years hoping that the location of a subterranean treasure would be revealed to him as a reward for his penance deserves my sympathy but not respect. The heroes of the Congress are in the position of this stubborn man, for they hope for the treasure of Hindu-Muslim Unity, which does not exist, and they seek it in a way which cannot secure it to them. If it does, it will be at the cost of their own culture and existence. For time and again have I said that until Hindus set their own house in order, their suffering will not bring them independence, nor, will it give birth to a united Hindu-Muslim nation. And if even that elusive child is born, it will have been born after destroying one of its parents. The leg of the stubborn hero will have been lost in the effort and nothing can convince me that it is a small price to pay.

I find that my experience in every respect corroborates R. B. Lal Chand's views. He based his conclusions on the experience of the Congress lasting over 25 years. I have watched it for 27



only be achieved if Hindus are united and are awakened to their ancient ideals. Hindu-Muslim unity means Hindu-Muslim partnership in a common endeavour to liberate the country and to make it great and prosperous. A partnership is only possible between equals, between those who bring into their agreement equal resources of business. Hindus are politically scattered ; they have little faith in their own culture and their own greatness. If they ask Muslims to join them, they will secure Muslim consent at the cost of those preserves for which Hindus in ancient days fought and died. Besides, unless Hindus present a united front to Muslim communalists, no amount of concessions will satisfy these seekers of India's ruin. Seeing that Hindus are weak, they ask for more and more concessions. Already they are dreaming of a Muslim *raj* in India and a number of them feel that thanks to Hindu disunity, it is within the pale of realisation. Is the Congress fighting for that Swarajya ?

When R. B. Lal Chaud wrote "Self abnegation in Politics," Gokhale and Feroz Shah Mehta were the ideals of the Congress. What he said about these leaders applies almost without qualification to the two great leaders today. What he said about the frontier Province remains true today. The attitude of the Congress towards it has not changed a whit. In one or two letters he condemned the indifference of the Congress towards public services and expressed the belief that the Congress ideal of a colonial form of government was impracticable. The situation in this respect has undoubtedly changed and we should not forget that R. B. Lal Chand was writing in 1909, but his remarks about a colonial form of government would apply to the present method and ideals of the Congress, i e, nonco-operation and complete independence. The principle of communal representation incorporated in Minto-Morley reforms threw him into a rage and it was only a beginning. One can imagine how he would have

felt about the Communal Award today. He complained, as I do, that the Hindu Press is Congress ridden and it was to counteract Congress teaching that the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College was founded. Above all he exhorted Hindus to exert their great weight in politics through an organisation of their own which might take the form of the Hindu Sabha. The need for constant vigilance in the march of events on the part of the Hindus on the pain of their ruin was seldom emphasised with greater force or reason and never was vigilance needed more than it is today.

Before I conclude the foreword, I would like to add another testimony of a great Bengali, who completely supports the views expressed in the following pages. Lt. Col. U. N. Mukerji at about the same time as R. B. Lal Chand wrote his wellknown book "A Dying Race." The last few paragraphs of the book are relevant to our subject and are reproduced here. It is regrettable that the Bengal Hindus, who are now in a sad plight, ignored the note of warning given by Col. Mukerji, just as the Hindus of the Punjab ignored the warning of late Lala Lal Chand.

"We Hindus are most ridiculously, most contemptibly ignorant. We have no idea about what is going on around us. Others are not quite so ignorant. In the course of his reply to the All-India Moslem League—referred to before—the Secretary of State for India told the deputation : "I know very well, that any injustice, any suspicion that we are capable of being unjust to the Mohammadans in India would certainly have a very severe and injurious reaction in Constantinople. (Hear, hear.)" I wonder how many Hindus understand the significance of this utterance. A few days later he took the opportunity to proclaim from his place in the House of Lords that "all the demands of the " will be met with in full." This was practically of two Mohammadans, one of whom could scarce Indian. But the English statesman knew that

these two individuals there was the solid mass of nearly 70 millions of Indian Mohammadans who were waiting for the reply.

"How do the two communities stand to-day? The Mohammadans have a future and they believe in it, we Hindus have no conception of it. Time is with them—time is against us. At the end of the year they count their gains, we calculate our losses. They are growing in number, growing in strength, growing in wealth, growing in solidarity, we are crumbling to pieces. They look forward to a united Mohammadan world—we are waiting for our extinction.

'The wages of sin is death. We Hindus have sinned deeply, damnably, against the laws of God and nature, and we are paying the penalty .

'In our treatment of our co-religionists lies the germ of our self-destruction. This is the history of the Hindus. The same process is going on around us.'

**BHAI PARMANANDA**

Lahore :

January, 1938.

## SELF-ABNEGATION IN POLITICS.

### I.

In a Note in the "Punjabee" of the 2nd February, under the heading Impudence *vs.* Gullibility," the Editor has rightly gauged the situation as between Hindus and Mohammadans in regard to the Reform Scheme. But in coming to his conclusion it appears to me the Editor has overlooked or atleast has not attached sufficient weight to one important matter, *viz.* the reference in Lord Morley's reply to Constantinople. In replying to the Mohammadan Deputation Lord Morley said;—"I know very well that any injustice, or suspicion that we are capable of being unjust to Mohammadans in India. would certainly have a *severe and injurious reaction* in Constantinople." The Italics are mine. That seems to me to form the crux of the whole situation. Mohammadans have Constantinople behind their back, not to speak of other Mohammadan independent States with which more or less British statesmanship have to deal. It is only but recently, under the new Turkish regime, that the British Government has been able to regain the lost ground of cordiality with Turkey, and it is nothing but natural that under the circumstances British statesmanship should be very anxious not to give any offence to Muslim claims, whether fancied or real. British statesmen, therefore, not only desire to conciliate Muslim opinion, but are seriously nervous lest they should give any offence to it. This frame of mind of British policy is now fully known to, and is understood by, the Indian Mohammadans, and they have opportunity to press their demands. Their at circumstances, far from being suppliant, is

ing full well as they do the complacent disposition of the Government. This is further evident from the growing impudence of the tone of demands which the Mohammadans have made during the last three years. And now they do not care to conceal their arrogance. On the least semblance even of a check to, or fancied attack upon, what they consider to be their vested rights they begin to utter threats.

The events of the last three years amply justify this presumptuous attitude on the part of the Mohammadans. They have all along succeeded, and sometimes, beyond their own expectations. On the other hand, the Hindus have to fall back on their gullibility. They have no independent State to support their cause not even to cheer them with sympathy for their grievances. They are circumscribed within the four walls of Hindustan and have no outside assistance to influence the attitude of their rulers. They might cry themselves hoarse over this Charter and that Proclamation, but words and protests do not make up for the inherent weakness of their position. Their only weapon is talk. They might talk discontent or loyalty, but neither materially influences the situation. If they talk discontent and sedition it would only require a stronger and more numerous recruitment of police and especially of Mohammadan police, and the passing of a few more repressive laws. But their discontent does not inspire the same awe or desire to conciliate as does the regard for Constantinople. While if the Hindus show loyalty, they are taken to be either hypocrites or devoid of the manly qualities of a race which deserves respect.

*To add to this natural misfortune the Hindus have got a self-inflicted one in what is called and known as the Congress. This has proved a veritable source of weakness for purely Hindu interests. If there is one thing which is strictly forbidden within the precincts of the Congress it is*

I am not drawing simply on imagination. A special resolution was passed in the Congress respecting Mohammadan grievances with regard to the law of endowments. It did not, of course, affect the Hindus in any manner, but I give it as an instance of sectarian resolution. In the 2nd Congress which was held at Lahore a Resolution was strongly supported by the Congress leaders, demanding special concessions to Mohammadans in the matter of education, but it was dropped owing to strong opposition by the delegates. On the other hand, a resolution relating to the Land Alienation Act could not be put forward because it was objected to by one Mohammadan delegate and might possibly give offence to Mohammadans outside the Congress. And what is the result of that piece of class legislation? The Hindu middle class, which, as past history shows, is the real backbone of the community has now been driven away from one legitimate source of livelihood, namely, the land. In the absence of any effective opposition the state of affairs has gone from bad to worse. Even the little which was left under the original Land Alienation Act has, it is said for the sake of consistency, been taken away under the Land Alienation Amendment Act. And mark the difference again here so far as the Government is concerned. There were two Acts at the same time for disposal before the Punjab Legislature, one relating to the Chenab Colonies and the second for amending the Land Alienation Act. The former was objected to by Mohammadans equally with Hindus as it encroached on their interests also, and it was finally vetoed. The latter, which was objected to by the Hindus only, was passed in spite of strong Hindu discontent at the time. Not only this, but the Hindus received a good thrashing at the same time to put them on their good behaviour. A number of men regarded as their "leaders" were prosecuted on charges, and one deported. And yet a Hindu member sits as a Hindu in the Congress. Nay, he has no p

the public Press. Taking its cue from the Congress Pandal the Hindu Press has accepted as one of the cardinal maxims of its creed not to utter or use the word "Hindu". Whenever there is a Hindu grievance it must be agitated as an 'Indian' grievance, or not at all. It is indeed a very dangerous sentimentality which chokes the Hindu Press. The Hindu Press is afraid and feels ashamed to ventilate a pure Hindu grievance, with the result that neither the Government nor any one else ever hears that there is any such thing as a Hindu grievance.

Take another instance in this Province, namely the public service. There is no doubt that there is a considerable amount of discontent among the Hindu Middle class with regard to their position in relation to Government service. Being driven away from their livelihood on the land, they are also being gradually ousted from Government service as a means of living. And, barring law and medicine, the only remaining source left is trade and industry where they are making a struggle. But the Hindu Press is afraid by its self-inflicted creed to take up the pure Hindu cause. We may say things in disguise or in a round-about manner, but not directly, because we are afraid of being twitted with taking up a sectarian cause. That privilege, with great magnanimity, is left for the Muslim Press. While therefore the Mohammadan Press may go on sapping the very foundations of Hindu interests, the Hindu Press must look on with generosity and see the fire consuming their own houses. It is afraid of being charged with sectarianism, as if sectarianism even under pressure of competition were loathsome to touch. The highest ideal of conduct, no doubt, is universal brotherhood, provided there were no such things as race and nation. If these two terms could be expunged from human dictionary it would be millennium, but evidently it is an impossible ideal to attain. It is a high ideal again, no doubt, to have a united nation.

But it looks to me the very height of folly and absurdity to go on crying for a united nation when one important community, by its words and actions, make it persistently and absolutely clear that they do not desire nor seek for union. The remedy when such evil exists is not to say we are one, but to declare emphatically that we are two. The generosity under such circumstances is taken for weakness and only aggravates the disease. It helps to add to the aggressive and presumptuous attitude of the other party. The moral ideal, that when slapped on one cheek you should offer the other for a slap, has no place in politics. Here the maxim is just the reverse. If you are slapped, give proper return, and you would at once find a desire by the other side to make friends. The method of offering the other cheek for being slapped has now been tried for over 20 years. There has been enough of coaxing and fawning, which by giving undue importance to the other community has begotten only insolence and impudence. May we not now try the counter method and see its result? At least this is a method equally worth trying, and I am sure we shall not thereby be worse off than we are. This method seems to have been very recently tried, and tried with great success, in a railway carriage, though in a different sphere of life. A Dogra Hindu Rajput entered a railway carriage at night time at a certain station, and finding a berth occupied by a British soldier who was lying at his ease and no other room, he took his seat just at the end of the berth occupied by the soldier. The latter stretched out his legs and gave a gentle push. The Rajput bore it with meekness and removed himself a little further to the end. This, however, did not satisfy the son of Mars. He gave a second and a more violent push with his feet. This naturally exasperated the Dogra Rajput, and the latter at once gave a slap, which being returned, the sold minute down on the floor of the carriage with hands on his throat. This at once brought hum



conciliation, and the soldier left the carriage at the next station.

I do not for a moment say and urge that the Hindus ought to be offensive and aggressive, or take up quarrels with other communities. They ought to try to live on the best possible peaceful terms with their neighbours, and true to their charitable instincts, even occasionally make a sacrifice for reconciliation as the Rajput did. But a purely and persistent aggressive attitude ought to be met by an equally aggressive attitude. In war this is one of the elementary principles of tactics, and it ought to have an equally important place in politics. When Hindu interests are threatened at the very foundations, these should not only be safeguarded but protected effectively. And my own impression is that if such policy is pursued a favourable change will soon be visible in the mode of thinking and conduct and behaviour of our Muslim brethren. But what is the result at present? The Hindus have no outside friends and sympathisers to look after and press their claims. Inside India they are helpless between the police and repressive measures, even if they give utterance to their grievances. *The Congress the only political machinery in the country, will not take up their cause because from the very commencement it has assumed to itself a sentimental ideal and is now afraid to climb down, happen what may even though the situation may result in disaster to the Hindus. The Hindu Press is wedded to the Congress cry and is equally hesitant to advocate purely Hindu interests.* What is to be done then? Are the Hindus then simply to remain as spectators of their own ruin? I shall attempt to answer this question in another communication.

In my letter under the heading "Self-Abnegation in politics" printed in the *Punjabee* of 23rd ultimo, I referred to the imbecility of the Hindus in protecting their own interests and the dangerous predicament they were placed in owing to their self-imposed attempt at unification. I further alluded to the fact that, while their cause lacked support, both from within and without, their political rivals were busy heart and soul in pushing forward their communal nationality and making the gulf between the two communities as wide as it may be. The result was that Hindu nationality and Hindu sentiments were being gradually obliterated and thrown in the back ground if not pushed out of existence. The view I took hardly stood in need of any support, but by a strange coincidence it has received ample vindication even at the hands of your local Mohammadan contemporary in a very recent issue.

There is one little question which at present is troubling the self-jubilant serenity of the Muslim mind, viz. the claims of Urdu against the *Punjabee* language and literature, and the writer in that issue takes the opportunity to read a sermon to Hindus on the futility of their Vedantic doctrines. He points out forcibly that Vedantism as preached by Guru Nanak has failed to make one religion in India, it has failed to achieve political union when proclaimed by Congress, and it must equally fail when pressed in service for the unification of language and letters. This is a very clear exposition of the relative attitude of the two communities, not only in religion but also in politics and daily intercourse, and should the Hindus still remain immersed in pseudo-Vedantism and regard the whole world as Maya or unreality and Hindus and Mussalmans as a united

their ancestors. For the latter worked out not an incomplete philosophy. While, they doubtless expiated on the One Cause for the universe, they were at the same time careful to lay the foundations of the Nyaya Shastra. Should not then the logic of events arouse the Hindus from their political sleep, for even Kumbh Karna used to awake at least once in six months or a year? It seems to me as if we are seized with sleeping sickness of a very dangerous type. Wrapped up in fantastic reveries of imagination like an opium-eater we continue to act the part in life of a Sheikh Chilly, and to revolve on ideas of a "united Indian nation" the rights of a "British citizen," Colonial form of Government, and other nonsense of the same genus and nature. And the wonder is that even the rudest shocks, threats and pricks do not avail to awaken us from our intense slumber.

Our rulers politely but plainly tell us that we ought not to amuse ourselves with any such musings, and that it is pure folly and madness to ask for concessions which even have a semblance of encroaching upon the complete maintenance and integrity of the sovereign rights of the ruling race. And yet we obdurately persist in talking of and demanding what we choose to call a "peacefull revolution." Not only that, but we actually imagine as if the mirage is within our easy grasp, and begin to dance merrily and with loud hallelujahs proceed to congratulate ourselves for receiving and our rulers for granting the boon. Verily the writer in the *Observer* is right in saying that we are Vedantists not only in religion, but in our political creed also.

Our next-door neighbours, the Muhammadans, never miss an opportunity to remind us that Hindu and Muslim are two inconsistent and even in great many respects antagonistic terms. This was also very forcibly pointed out

he address delivered by the Chairman of the Conference at Amritsar. And yet we go on crying for unity. Blow after blow is administered and yet the *Andh Tam Vistrit Maya* cannot be knocked out of the Hindu brains. Here is an object-lesson given by the Muhammadan community. They feel or pretend to feel that the Urdu-Panjabee question in this Province touches them vitally. And in giving vent to their feelings they have not hesitated to shower abuse on the head of a most prominent member of the Hindu community and even to accuse the rulers of Irish proclivities for sympathising with the Indian Nationalists. They have, moreover, declared in the clearest possible manner that even though every minute they speak the common language, yet their linguistic ideal is not identical with ours, but different, and must imbibe inspiration from countries beyond the confines of India. Again take another instance of Muhammadan *amour propre*. H. H. the Agha Khan, who is in no small degree fed and maintained by the offerings of his Hindu votaries, when interviewed on the question of the appointment of a member to the Council of the Viceroy of India, would rather not have the appointment made at all if a Hindu alone would receive the appointment. It is clear as day-light that the appointment is not intended for a Hindu alone, and that a Mohammadan is sure to get his chance in the alternative—knowing what we know of the action of the Government in other matters and yet His Highness cannot brook the idea of a Hindu being the sole member in the Viceroy's Council for the space of two years. His Highness, it will be remembered, is one of the leading members of the Muhammadan community and one of the main pillars and supporters of Aligarh Custantania.

In my previous letter I have given some instances of Government leanings in favour of Muhammadans, and if His Highness could but check his volubility for a while

from giving vent to his inner rancorous feelings, he would have found the solace laid to his heart even in this matter at an early opportunity. It appears to me necessary to support my position by a few more instances in the same direction before proceeding further. And let us begin with the highest, the Secretary of State's own Council. Two members have been appointed to the Council, one a Hindu and another a Muhammadan. One feels tempted to question on what principle the two appointments were made. Were they made on the basis of numerical proportion? If so at least three Hindus to one Muhammadan ought to have been appointed. Were they made on the basis of fitness and qualifications? If so, could not two Hindus or two Muhammadans of similar qualifications be secured in the country to join the Council? Was it necessary to have class representation? If so, why not have in the Council representatives of Sikhs, Jains, Eurasians and Native Christians, and Parsees as well? The Secretary of State, in his reply to the Muhammadan Deputation headed by Mr. Amir Ali, emphatically repudiated the idea that there is any need of class representation on the Executive Council of the Viceroy. On what principle, then, one is driven to ask the question, did the Secretary of State select one Hindu and one Muhammadan for his own Council? The mischief was once for all committed when the selection was made not on the simple principle that the nominees were qualified, but also on the ground that one was a Hindu and the other a Muhammadan by religion. There cannot be any manner of doubt that a second Hindu of even better claims could have been secured. But this was not done in due deference to Muhammadan feelings and sentiments. A principle of equal division and importance was conceded with all the ruinous results which must follow from it. It was an act of brave and glaring injustice to the Hindu community. For whether on the basis of numerical ratio or importance in

were entitled to have three seats to one appointment of a Muhammadan. But who would speak for Hindu interests? Not the Congress, that slavishly follows the heels of a Parsee Knight and which is even more afraid to give offence to Muhammadan sentiments than the Secretary of State himself, for the sake of a few Muhammadan delegates in borrowed *choghas*, as Bakhshi Tek Chand has rightly pointed out in his able and well-considered letter. Not the Hindu Press, which must *volens volens* echo the Congress tune.

Take, again, another instance, the next best in rank and nearer home, *viz*, the appointments to High Courts in India. Within the last two years four Muhammadan Judges have been appointed to the High Courts (including Chief Courts) and the proportion at present for all India is four Muhammadans against five Hindus. Is this a right proportion in justice to Hindu interests? In Madras Presidency, according to the figures given by the Secretary of State, the Hindus are 89 per cent. against 6 per cent of Muhammadans. In the United Provinces the proportion is 85 per cent against 15. In Bengal the ratio is 57 to 38, and in the whole of India the ratio is 75 to 25 per cent. And yet in spite of these figures the proportion of appointments is 5 to 4, and appointments in equal number have been made in Bengal, Madras and the United Provinces. It would appear as if Muhammadan legal talent has sprung up all of a sudden into obtrusive existence. In a speech in reply to a Muhammadan deputation the Governor of Bombay was reported to have remarked that legal talent is not an incident of birth. But His Excellency evidently overlooked that there is a natural birth as well as an artificial birth, and that the latter can be *forced* into creation and service by the

could it not be offered to an equally qualified Hindu inside the Presidency or another Hindu outside who would have agreed to it, when the numerical proportion of the two communities in that Presidency is 89 to 6 ? The Secretary of State speaks of the importance of Muhammadans as a community in the United Provinces in spite of their minor numerical strength, but he takes it for granted that the Hindu minority in the Punjab is of no importance against the Muhammadan majority so that according to the Secretary of State where the Muhammadans form a majority they must get a lion's share as a matter of course; and where they are in a minority, they will get it on the basis of their supposed importance. Was this then the basis on which the first appointment in the United Provinces was conferred on Mr. Justice Mahmud over the heads of men like Pandits Bishambhar Nath and Ajudhia Nath ? It appears as if the figures become elastic according as they meet or not the Mohammadan interests. When these various appointments were made, not a word was said that they were partial and displayed bias in favour of one religious community, not a word was uttered that they unjustly encroached upon the Hindu interests. The Congress and Press were equally dumb because the process, it was imagined, united the nation—a very desirable end to achieve even by self-immolation. I believe the unification would very well and easily be expedited if the Hindus were one morning to embrace Islam in a body; or if that were to prove too much a "strain" for Mr. Gokhale and his Society, then if they were to retire altogether from the arena of public life, leaving the field to other communities and themselves taking to pursuits, such as hewing wood and carrying water. I am not sure whether this even will be held to be satisfactory. But it will at least lead to unification by a process of elimination. Both in theory and in practice the Hindus have already been reduced

tion. They will soon be reduced to a position of one-third as another community of one kith and creed with the rulers is rapidly rising. Where we shall be in the end in this process of self-abnegation and self-immolation under a desire to form a united nation it is not very difficult to imagine. I shall attempt to support my view by a few more concrete instances in my next.

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That the best guarantee for peace is preparedness for war, is a political maxim which has from time to time been proclaimed at Berlin, London and New York. It has no direct application to a subordinate community like ours, but it contains a modicum of truth which may well be laid at heart in our relations to other communities similarly situated. *Unfortuna'ely the poison imbibed for the last twenty-five years under the Congress treatment has so obscured our vision that we have lost all power of seeing things in true proportions.* Lord Morley, in his reply to the Mohammadan deputation, felt bound in courtsey to extend his encomiums to the Madras Congress as well, but he felt (and by his action showed that he felt) that the community which really deserved that praise was the community represented in the Amritsar Educational and Political Conference. *It seems to me under the circumstances absolutely necessary to apply the knife to remove the film from our vision, which would then of itself, without the forcep's help, become bright and clear.* Some people are getting impatient and retort that the view propounded here is purely destructive. It is so, no doubt. But if an evil has seized a community and is eating up its vital parts, it is according to all right medical opinion needful to purge the poison before giving tonics. This is a matter of daily experience in malarial fever. Quinine as antidote is of no avail or of very little avail without a thorough cleaning and purging of the bowels. It appears to me that the Hindu community at this moment is in the grip of malaria of a dangerous type. The self-abnegation in politics which the Hindu community has adopted to achieve the formation of an Indian nation, is suicidal. I may be wrong in this diagnosis when set against a Gokhale or a Surendra Nath, but it is my sincere belief—and I mean to press it on the

*attention of the Hindu community—that they are proceeding on wrong lines, and that self-effacement, whatever may be the reward for it, is not a desirable means or end.* The progress of nations is as a rule slow and tedious, as it involves the movement not of a few or of a small bulk, but of large Himalayan masses. Earthquakes and tornadoes are of very rare occurrence not only in physical nature, but also in the physiology of nations. This is applicable even with greater force to the case of a nation domineered by another nation. Here, pressed by pressure from above and from the sides and being dragged from within, the progress is imperceptibly slow. And if that particular community, in lieu of gaining, loses ground, even if it be by an inch, the result is disastrous. In such cases the process which obliterates or tends to obliterate the traditional landmarks and makes the nation forget itself must be destroyed. This is gain in itself. It prepares the ground for new life and vigour and the raising of a new structure. The old materials may be used and applied, but the plan and design must be different.

—and it is not a mean authority and prestige—of the Royal Proclamation. This view, however, has been brushed aside rudely. Then we began to imagine that the proper principle for distribution of State patronage is numerical strength. This idea also has been set aside, and set aside very recently, by no less a personage than the Secretary of State himself. I have already given two instances to prove this assertion, *viz.*, the nomination of members in the Council of the Secretary of State and the appointment of Judges to the various High Courts in the country. In neither case, numerical strength has been taken into account, nor pure merit, and in both creed seems to have supplied the chief ground. And now take the third instance—the Reform Scheme itself. Here, again, the fundamental principle is to be not qualification, nor the numerical strength of each community, but what is called “importance,” a vague expression under which in the absence of any valid defence or legitimate excuse for barefaced injustice, refuge is taken to cover imbecility to resist pressure.

It appears to me that the historian and philosopher Secretary of State never analysed his own mind when he used the term in response to Mohammadan deputation as furnishing a “modifying” cause. For, pray, what is meant by “importance”. It is doubtless an English term, but not a term of such abstruse significance as may not be generally understood by an Indian who has learnt the English language. And in any case we can have recourse to an English Dictionary. “Importance” is defined by Webster to mean the “quality of being important, consequence, weight, moment, significance”. The definition does not carry us very far, but it gives some inkling of the meaning of importance. It implies consequence, weight and significance. Now, what are the qualities which make up weight and significance in this world? These are affluence, influence and merit. I ask the question. Is the Hindu

community of less importance in these matters. than the Mohammadans ? Are they poorer in riches, weaker in influence with the masses, or backward in intellectual progress? Take even the subjective point of view—the point of self-interest, which will naturally best recommend itself to the Government. The foremost matter which will press on the attention of any Government which at all cares for self-existence is FINANCES. Whether for war or peace the Government cannot exist for any time without funds to support it. The Japanese could not have achieved what they did achieve in the Russo-Japanese war if they had not been financed by British money by way of loans. Now as between the Hindus and the Mohammadans, who contribute most towards the revenue by which is supported the structure of the Government, and but for which it would in no time crumble into pieces. Can there be any question that it is the Hindus who contribute the major portion, and is it the reward for their contribution to be relegated to a position of secondary importance ? Is the Government consulting its own interests in declaring and acting upon the declaration that Mohammadans possess greater importance ? Is it not a suicidal policy to create a feeling of sullenness among the teeming millions of Hindus by telling them that they are of less importance ? Lord Morley may cast his glance at Constantinople. Constantinople, however, is far off, but a chilling feeling, due to unjust aspersion as of less importance, with its evil consequences, is nearer home. Lord Morley himself, when advocating the necessity for Reforms in the House of Lords, expatiated in one passage on the necessity of conciliation and the evil results of sullenness. But

in India. . To them I appeal to say on what ground did Lord Minto concede the principle of importance in favour of the Mohammadans in his speech as well as by action? I have stated that in my estimation importance consists in affluence, influence, and intelligence, and this is so peculiarly in politics. In religion the foundation for importance is altogether different, but we are not concerned with that. I have also stated that it is of the utmost use to the Government to have sound finances, and these depend in their turn on taxes, and therefore a community is important in proportion as it pays taxes.

Then take another matter necessary for Government into consideration, namely, the recruiting field for soldiers. Here, too, the Hindus with their Goorkhas, Rajputs, Sikhs Brahmins, preponderate over the members of the other community. In what does, then, the importance of the followers of Islam consist? The history of a conquered nation is a mere matter of tradition and is of no importance from the point of view of the conquering nation. I don't believe for a moment that it is in the self-interest of the conquerors that the conquered should continue to remember their past greatness and glory. I do not therefore, believe that this matter does or can honestly enter in making up the ingredients of importance from the point of view of the conquerors; but if it does, then there, too, the truth, the historical truth, is that the Hindus were the people who had the reins of government long before they were transferred to the British. The wars of the 18th century and some time before were the wars with Mah-rattas, Pindarees, Nepalese and Sikhs, and not with the Mohammadans, who had already lost their hold and, from the political point of view, were crumbling into non-existence. It is, therefore, impossible to imagine any consideration which can be held to give the palm to the followers

of Islam. If this analysis, and it is believed in by the Hindu community in general, is incorrect, then at least in all justice to this community it is essential and necessary to tell them in what does importance consist as believed in and acted upon by the Government.

I cannot for a moment induce myself to believe that a wide-awake and intelligent Government like the British can hold that importance consists in sycophancy. At any rate, if there be any such notion then it ought to be declared so that people may know how to gain importance. When the British came they expressed by their words and actions that it gave one importance to learn English language. The Hindus took to it and learnt the English language which gave them importance. This is, however, now considered as an inconvenient process, and importance perhaps now consists in unlearning English. That probably the Hindus are unlikely to do, at any rate, for a considerable time. They are now asked to take to science and turn to the beauties of their own classical literature. This the Hindus are doing and doing with great zest. But in addition to learning Shakespeare, Mill and Milton, and not to their exclusion. Again the British are an eminently money-making people, and the Hindus emulating them took to trade with great zeal in order to secure importance in the eyes of their rulers. This again has proved somewhat inconvenient owing to Swadeshi, a demand for protective taxes and removal of the countervailing excise duty on cotton goods. And so far as I can judge, the inconvenience is likely to stay and not to vanish. Thus hitherto the Hindus have only followed the lead of their rulers in acquiring knowledge and learning trade in the sincere belief that it will make them important in the eyes of their rulers. If, however, the standard of importance is now changed, then surely the Hindus are entitled to ask, and the Government bound to reply, in what does importance now consist. A repl.

on this point would greatly help to pacify the present political irritation. When the people come to know the mind of their Government, there will surely be time and occasion for them to make their choice. They may elect to adapt themselves to the new standard and thereby gain importance or they may elect not to adopt it, and in that case the mortification will be less as the non-attainment of success will be partly due to their own will and choice. Situated as we are, the Government without notice is pushing us to a secondary position, and we in our desire to please our neighbours are willingly, without even entering a protest, accepting that position. This is really unification with a vengeance.

When in my last letter I spoke of Hindus one morning embracing Islam in a body, I spoke of an impossible case, and the plea I was and am putting forward for Hindus to form a separate nation can leave no doubt that if I could entertain a desire in the matter it would be exactly the reverse. There are, however, people among the Hindus who wish to remove the bar of religion also in order to obtain unity. This is, however, a craze of another hue and has no place in our present discussion. What I here bitterly complain of is that in spite of their relegation to a secondary position by the Reform Scheme, which is a matter of utmost significance from the standpoint of political importance, Hindus still adhere to the Congress craze. This was illustrated by the Town Hall meeting held recently at Calcutta regarding the Reform Scheme. A protest was raised against the omission of Clause 3 relating to Executive Councils in the larger Provinces, but no meeting has yet been held there to protest against the preferential treatment proposed to be accorded to Muhammadans. The Hindus of Bengal, it seems, are afraid to assert themselves as a separate entity, happen what may, even though the partition, which so far has proved a

in the interests of Mohammadans of the Eastern province. A strange fatuity seems so far to have seized the sensitive Hindus of Bengal. The partition itself is an instance of favouring one community at the cost of another. It is unjust and is felt much. The obvious intention was to secure favourable provincial treatment to what was a minority by making it a majority, and yet Hindu Bengali trained and disciplined in the Congress creed that there is no such thing as a Hindu is afraid to assert his grievance as a Hindu grievance. He is fighting the issue but on a wrong ground. From the very outset the fight ought to have been on the ground that the Partition was an injury to Hindu interest. That cry would have been of greater force than the one taken up. But the mistake committed in the Congress perpetrated here again with the same disastrous result for the sake of carrying sympathy with few Mohammadans by which no one was or is deceived. The injury was described again as an injury to Bengal, as if the division of a country into two for purposes of administration can ever work an injury. This is the condition to which we have been reduced by a desire for unification. Even when touched in the most vital parts, we are afraid to utter the word Hindu and agitate our grievance as a Hindu grievance. And all this even in the most advanced Hindu Province. So far as to its importance. I hope to revert to the second phase of the Reform Scheme in my next letter.



#### IV.

Thirty-two miles north-east of Lahore, as the Railway runs, is a first class Municipality, third in rank in the whole Province, where according to the system of election in vogue, separate representatives are elected by the Mohammadans and by the Hindus. According to immemorial usage, of which the origin is as ancient as Municipal Institutions itself, the members in the Committee meetings arrange themselves in two rows, around the Presidential chair. On the left are seated the representatives of the banner of Islam, and on the right the descendents of the old Rishis of Aryavarta. The order of precedence is again very scrupulously observed in each row by the members, the most senior in rank being seated nearest the Presidential chair, and so till the end. I was at first inclined to trace the origin of

is separatist system to the proverbial Punjabi head. The Punjab is noted for some of its archaic and eccentric customs, and I thought this arrangement must be the result of the same ingenuity in the Punjabi brain. For in my roving and wanderings through the lanes and streets of the city of the pool of Immortality, which by the way have not been infrequent, I have always failed to find a train, a sewer, a latrine, heap of filth or sweepings—or to be precise “dust, dirt, dung, ashes, and refuse of any kind” dubbed as Muhammadan or marked as Hindu. These gentlemen who arrange themselves in two rows—Hindu and Muhammadan—around the chair of the official President, mix with each other indiscriminately in the Bar Room, in business matters, and in recreation parties. Why they array themselves into Hindu-Muhammadan sides when holding a Municipal meeting must be due, I thought, to the proverbial Punjabi head. When the Municipal affairs are discussed, in ninety-nine out of one hundred questions, I believe, they do not represent any sharp line such as

distinguishes the Hindu creed from the Muhammadan. By far the largest majority of questions refer only to the common weal and have nothing in them of a denominational or sectarian nature. The position, as arranged, however, suits well the art of balancing parties. By this arrangement the members are constantly reminded that they are not simply Municipal Commissioners but they are as Muhammadans *versus* Hindus and *vice versa*. Whether therefore there be not a Hindu or a Muhammadan question, the members are always on the alert to turn it into one and the general trend of their activity is not so much to look after Municipal affairs, as to see that no advantage is gained by a Hindu or by a Muhammadan. They sit against each other just as a huntsman sits in an ambuscade to fall upon his prey at the opportune moment, and their general anxiety is not to administer Municipal affairs, but to checkmate each other as on a chess board.

What has happened and is happening on a small scale in a tiny town (the citizens will pardon me for using the term, as I am speaking in a comparative sense) has now been sanctioned for the Indian Empire, and not under the influence of the Puujabi head, as I imagined the above case, but under the imprimature of a philosopher, historian and statesman of Cabinet rank. The fiat has now gone forth that there shall be separate electorates and separate representatives for the Hindus and the Mohammadans from top to bottom. This is the Reform Scheme, the product of twenty-five years' labour of the Congress, and which is to usher in peace and plenty in the land. What is now happening in Municipal affairs on a small scale will happen on a large scale in the Provincial and the Imperial Council. The Members, when sitting in the Council Chambers, will not forget their denominational likes and dislikes. They are constantly reminded that they

sectarian interests. A thing of this sort is happening even now, thanks to the sectarian activity of the followers of Islam. But if this is to be so under the approval and sanction of the highest authority of the land, is it not urgently needful for the Hindus equally that they should forget the Congress creed and assert themselves purely as Hindus? This is the position which must now be faced boldly and directly. *An attempt at unification has failed and failed miserably. Instead of the growth of one united nation, a sharp line of demarcation has been drawn and sanctioned by authority. In making their attempt the Hindus have lost ground and their interests have been pushed backward. There is surely time yet to turn round and try to recover lost ground. And this can only be achieved by asserting purely Hindu interest, and not by an Indian propaganda. The consciousness must arise in the mind of each Hindu that he is a Hindu, and not merely an Indian, and when it does arise the newly awakened force is bound to bring its results.*

An instance of how we are being thrown into the background by failing to assert Hindu interests is afforded again by the Reform Scheme itself, as applied to this Province. Lord Morley, when referring to their statistics in reply to the Mohammadan Deputation, took it for granted that the Hindu minority in this Province is of no account and importance. He said: "If you take numerical strength as your basis, in the Punjab and Eastern Bengal Mohammadans are in the decisive majority. In the Punjab the Mohammadan population is 53 per cent. to 38 per cent Hindu." This calculation evidently takes no account of the Khalsa, who are treated merely as a negligible quantity, in spite of the blood they have shed to uphold British suzerainty. Lord Morley continued :—"Coming to the United Provinces there the Muslims are  $6\frac{3}{4}$  millions to  $40\frac{3}{4}$  Hindus, 14 per cent. to 85 per cent. This ratio of numerical strength no more represents the proportion in the elements of

weight and importance than in Eastern Bengal does the rate of 37 per cent. Hindus to 58 per cent. Muslims." According to this reasoning the Hindu minority in the Panjab is of no weight and importance, while the Sikhs are simply ciphers. On the other hand, the Mohammadan minority of 14 to 85 in the United Provinces is weighty and important, and so is the Hindu minority of 28 to 57 in Eastern Bengal. And mark the difference in the figures: 14 to 85 as set against 37 to 58, while 38 to 53 is treated as altogether unimportant. But whether this reasoning is in consonance with facts is a matter which touches us directly. Mohammadans doubtless form the majority in numbers in this Province, but the difference is not large. If the Sikhs are included as they ought, the proportion would be about 47 to 53. If the numerical strength were to form the basis of distribution of State patronage throughout India I would have no complaint to make, and the Hindus would gladly accept it as giving an intelligent basis in the absence of a standard based on qualification, which doubtless affords a more reasonable foundation. But the basis actually adopted is neither here nor there. Neither qualification nor numerical strength is accepted, but "weight and importance" of which no criterion or test is given, as I pointed out in my last letter. And this is most irritating as it implies ~~nothing but~~ but an arbitrary standard as it may suit the whims of officials, from the Assistant Commissioner to the Secretary of State.

In my last letter I referred to some of the ingredients which make up importance. These are affluence, influence, intelligence, and the capacity to pay taxes and to bear arms in support of the Government. Apply any of these tests to the population in this Province as a whole or caste against caste and it would be purely blind obstinacy that will not give the palm of weight and importance to the Hindu community. Whether in riches, intelligence, or influence with the masses the Hindus doubtless carry a greater prestige. The Hindu money-lender may be hated by some of the officials, but they are ignorant of the vast influence which he possesses over the village folk, including the Mohammadans. He may be partially excluded from the village by the Land Alienation Act, but he is still there and cannot be entirely ousted. He has only to accommodate himself to his new environment, but his influence is only extended and not curtailed by his inability to invest in land. He is thereby obliged to send his son to foreign countries, to learn trade or to come out as an I. M. S. or as a Barrister. There is one fallacy which runs through the misguided and misinformed official brain, and which is causing great mischief and requires to be demolished and destroyed. It is imagined by the officials here as if the Hindu middle class are merely "Banias." This appears to me to be at the bottom of the whole mischief here in this Province. Look at history. This Hindu middle class were practically the rulers not only in the Sikh time, but even under the Mohammadan regime. Does the British official know who were the Kardars and Dewans of the Sikh time? The Kardar of the Sikh time corresponded to the modern Deputy Commissioner. He administered districts, and the Dewan corresponded to a modern Commissioner and managed divisions consisting of several districts. And these with few exceptions were selected and employed from amongst the Hindu middle class. By the revolution brought about by the overthrow of the Sikh Government their

descendants have taken to money-lending in some cases, or to Government service or the independent professions, but they cannot so easily forget their past and be relegated to a secondary or unimportant position. The members of their community acted not only as Kardars and Dewans, but also as Kanungos, and practically held the whole administration in their hands. Since the change in the Government they have done so even under their new rulers so far as circumstances have permitted.

But now a change in policy is going to be inaugurated for turning the tables. This change must result in a struggle. If a Hindu goes to an officer for employment he is told he is not required because he is a Hindu. I am told that in a certain district close to the east bank of the Beas, the whole of the subordinate administration, which at one time was managed by the Hindus, is now largely in the hands of one single caste of the Muhammadans. The question is, where were these Muhammadans during the Sikh and the Muhammadan times, and on what principle is this ouster founded? If it were done on the ground of superior qualifications there would be no ground of complaint. If it were done on the basis of superior numerical strength there would again be no complaint provided the rule were followed throughout the country, including the neighbouring Province where the proportion is 14 to 85, and Madras where it is 6 to 89. But if it is done on neither ground, but on the ground of policy or of importance, then I say, look at it with clear eyes and not through the glasses of prejudice. Take into consideration riches, intelligence, and the capacity to pay taxes and to bear arms, and even past history, and then decide which and who is more important. I have referred to the case of the Hindus in this Province as constituting and

With a few exceptions of good families the majority were what they are even now under the sunshine of British patronage. They were cultivators of land, sellers of garden produce, cobblers, barbers, masons, carpenters, and dhobis. There were no doubt certain high-caste Muhammadans, a few who had migrated from Arabia and Persia, and some converts from Rajputs, Brahmans and Khattris, who maintained their high-caste pride and dealt on an equal footing with their Hindu brethren, while the two together in spite of difference in religion formed a common brotherhood. But these formed as they do even now a minority of the population. The great bulk of the Muslim population were converts from the lower classes and carried on the callings I have mentioned above. I do not for a moment say that these last are to be despised on account of their occupations. They form as essential a part of the body corporate as the upper ten. But what I cannot understand is that if the son of a trading Hindu is unfit to do certain clerical or administrative work, how is the son of a barber, cobbler, or for that matter even of a vegetable seller, better fitted to do that work by reason of his hereditary calling and training? There appears to me therefore to be an entire misapprehension as to the status of this Province, and that misapprehension unfortunately prevails throughout the official ranks. Their past history and status is altogether ignored, their present education and position in life is entirely overlooked by the official, and they are virtually tabooed simply as "Banias" and of no importance and weight, even by the Secretary of State for the purposes of the Reform Scheme.

This is another instance where through blind prejudice, undue and unjust preference is given to one community by Government, and where Hindu interests have been sacrificed by self-abnegation at the altar of unification. If from

interests separately and independently and claimed their special class privileges, the result would have been different and they would not have been subjected to the humiliation now imposed upon them as "Banias" of no value and importance.

I shall in my next attempt to give a few more instances of how the favoured community clause has been working in favour of the Muhammadans because they have all along asserted and insisted upon a separate and independent position.



In my attempt to prove how we have fared badly by self-abnegation in politics, I have hitherto referred to three most prominent instances. I have spoken of the appointments made to the Council of the Secretary of State, where the principle of creed representation in derogation of other considerations has been recognised and applied. I have alluded to the appointments recently made in the several High Courts, where again the same principle has been enforced, apart from considerations of merit, in Provinces where the Muhammadan ratio is 6 to 89 and 14 to 85. I have lastly discussed in detail how very recently the same regard for creed has overborne all other considerations of numerical strength, weight, importance and past history in framing the Scheme for reforms in Councils. Here, as I have tried to show, not only has the mischievous principle of partition of communities been introduced, not only is unjust excessive representation promised in favour of the Muslim community, but there are signs of entirely overlooking the weight and importance of the Hindu community of this Province.

Already in this Province, as we all know, the Hindus labour under a variety of disabilities and disadvantages. And the Punjab Land Alienation Act is not the least of these grievances. The history of this unique piece of legislation places the matter beyond all manner of doubt. The idea was originally started for the benefit and in the interest of the Mahammadans of the Western part of the Province. It was represented that their lands were passing into the hands of the Hindu money-lenders, and this was to be a political evil. It will be useless on this  
Go.

note for my purpose that this special enactment was taken up as a class legislation and merely for the benefit of a particular religious community. It is true that no such distinction was made in the provisions of the act. The Act does not and could not provide expressly for protecting merely the interest of the Muhammadan community. This would have been too bitter a pill to swallow. But the ugly features of the legislation are concealed beneath a flimsy layer of white-wash. The most essential and important feature of the measure is made to depend upon Notifications to be issued by the Local Government. It is a familiar matter and does not require to be gone into any detail. The whole scope and working of the Act hinges upon the definition of Agricultural tribes, and this definition is left to the sweet will and pleasure of the Executive. By Section 3 a permanent alienation of land by a member of the agricultural tribe must be made in favour of a member of the same tribe or of a tribe in the same group, and by Section 4 the Local Government is empowered to determine what bodies of persons in any Districts or group of Districts are to be deemed to be agricultural tribes or groups of agricultural tribes. It is clear then that the pivot on which the framework of the scheme turns is the determination of an agricultural tribe by the Local Government. A glance, however, at the Notifications issued hitherto would suffice to convince how one community has benefitted at the expense of the other. There is not a single Notification in which Brahmans have been notified in any District as forming an agricultural tribe or a group of agricultural tribes. It is true that Brahmans are priests as well, but so are Sayyads. The latter form agricultural tribes in several Districts, but the Brahmans even in the Eastern and Northern Districts, whereas agriculturists they congregate in very large numbers. They memorialised in the Delhi Division for inclusion under the but evidently so far their prayers have rem:

Again, it is true that urban Khattris carry on occupations such as trade and money-lending mainly. But the rural Khattris are as good agriculturists as the Muhammadans. In places they own entire villages found by their ancestors. They do not till the lands with their own hands. But this is not an essential qualification for being an agriculturist. Even among the higher castes of Mohammadans such as Sayyads, Pathans and Moguls, personal cultivation of land is a rare circumstance. They employ the lower castes for the purpose, but for that circumstance they are not held disqualified from being grouped as members of agricultural tribes. Why then make a distinction between the higher castes of the Muhammadans and the higher castes of the Hindus? If Sayyads, Moguls and Pathans can be classified as agricultural tribes in spite of other callings, so also Brahmans, Khattris and Aroras ought to be.

As I have remarked, the real mischief effected by the Act is covered under the mask of Notifications. The policy here adopted is the same as is now being applied to the new Indian Councils Act. The Act itself does not profess to make any distinction of class and creed. But that distinction with its hideous features and ruinous result is bound to come under Rules and regulations for which ample provision has been made in the Act.

Further, whatever concession was made under the original Land Alienation Act has been taken away under the Amendment Act of 1907 and the Punjab Pre-emption Act. The term agriculturist which included a number of *bonafide* agricultural Hindu families has now been struck off from the Statute. And mark the mischief which has resulted. As the law stands now, it is almost impossible for a person not a member of an agricultural tribe, to acquire land for any purpose whatever—for trade, temple, factory, school, college, or even for performing the last rites. It is

unnecessary to multiply instances, as these must be familiar to every reader of the *Punjabee*, but I may mention only two to illustrate the evil. An important educational Hindu institution in the capital of the Province, which in spite of repeated prayers failed to get land from the Government for sports, purchased for the same a plot close to its main buildings. This has been pre-empted by a member of an agricultural tribe, and I am not able to conceive what defence the institution would be able to make out on the merits. In another case a Hindu gentleman of a very high position wished to purchase land near Lahore for a factory, but knowing full well that he could not do it of his own right, not being a member of an agricultural tribe, made the purchase in the name of a Muhammadan friend who was such member. This is the pass to which the Hindus, sons of the soil and its most ancient inhabitants, have been reduced, and yet it is wondered why they are dissatisfied. They cannot acquire even an inch of land, for love or money, in a country reclaimed and settled by their ancestors from time immemorial.

As I put it in my first letter, being driven from land and Government service the Hindus are making a struggle in trade and industries, but there too, owing to keen foreign competition with which in the absence of protection they are unable to cope, their prospects are far from brilliant or hopeful. Surely, it is time for the Government to reconsider the position and retrace its steps. As it was deemed necessary to take measures to protect the Muhammadans from the hands of "greedy money-lenders," it is equally just and reasonable to see that the protection so far extended does not transgress any legitimate bounds and does not in practice degenerate into an evil as a worse consequence than the remedy. Was it intended that the lands which for the past half century had been acquired by the Hindus should be driven back into the hands of th

Muhammadans? Even if so, what steps has the Government taken to relieve the Hindu poor such as would by this measure be thrown out of employment? It was deemed a political evil that Muhammadans were ousted from land. Is it not a question of equal importance that the Hindus should likewise possess some means of sustenance? And yet here again an invidious distinction is being made. Look to the rules framed for distribution of grants in lands in the Colonies. I am not in a possession of statistics to show how these have been distributed and therefore cannot make an assertion on the whole, but of this I am certain on unimpeachable authority that according to the rules whereas 5 acres were granted to a Hindu the provision for a Mohammadan was 7 acres. This at any rate was a matter completely in the hands of the Government and in making its gifts it ought to have shown an equal treatment and no special consideration for members of any particular community.

Not only in the distribution of lands, but even of scholarships for education unfortunately the same unjust distinction is observed, and this forms another important item of Hindu grievances in this province. On the occasion of the Jubilee of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen-Empress of India the Government was pleased to establish certain scholarships in connection with the Jubilee for an award to poor students receiving high education. Unluckily for the Hindus, however, since their inauguration, these scholarships have exclusively been awarded to Muhammadans only. There are doubtless Muhammadan poor students who would distinctly benefit by the award of these scholarships, but so there are among the Hindus. But the acme of the grievance is not merely that unjust distinction is made between the poor students of the two communities in awarding stipends, but that the distinction



to rectify the evil. When this Province was first acquired by the British about the middle of the last century, a number of officials, both European and Indian, were imported from the neighbouring Province for the purpose of administration, and these were all familiar with Urdu. Hence Urdu was at once adopted as a convenient vehicle for conducting court work, though the masses were absolutely ignorant of the language and the characters as much as of the English language itself. It is true as is urged on the other side that in the Sikh *regime* the official records were all maintained in the Persian language. But this argument has no force. The Sikh *regime* proved to be of a transitory nature. It had no time to stamp its character on and identify itself with the masses. It had barely been able to organise its work, and therefore naturally was obliged to continue the same in the language used by the Government it had superseded. The case, however, is entirely different under the British administration. This is not a passing wind just as was the Sikh *regime*. It has stayed and applied itself naturally to the cultivation of all those needs which characterise the peaceful progress of a nation, and the growth of its indigenous literature is one of the foremost of these requirements. The question, therefore, is not what was done during the Sikh period or under the *regime* of Mohammadan Emperors. "Those times have changed, those manners gone." The Mohammadan conquerors naturally enforced the study of their own language as a means of communication between the rulers and the ruled, just in the same way as the British have now enforced the study of the English language. But the analogy ceases here and applies no further. In either case the original inhabitants maintained intact their indigenous language and characters, viz., Sanskrit and Dev Nagri and in neither case the language and characters enforced by the foreigners could claim to be other than exotic. When the rulers were

learn their language to win court favours. When that rule ceased and was substituted by the British, it was natural that the British language should reign supreme where hitherto Persian had held sway. The legitimate result of the historic change ought to be the substitution of English for Persian, and not to maintain Persian in addition to English. Why we still cling to Persian, as if unwilling to part with the badge of past slavery, is a matter which passes my comprehension. It implies a degradation in character and surrender of national ideals which is simply amazing in quality and magnitude. I shall revert to the subject further in my next.



studies in their national schools. *Language is the cover wherein thoughts live and propagate, both are indissolubly connected with each other as body and soul and even more.* A change in the body may not affect the soul, but a change in the language stamps its impress on the thoughts. There are hundreds and thousands of Hindus who are ignorant of the beauties of Kalidasa and Ramayana, daily recreate themselves by composing poems and verses after the fashion of Zauk and Sauda. The height of absurdity was reached recently when in a theatrical performance to represent Ram Banbas, Vashisht was made to deliver his benedictions in high-flown Urdu. How tormented the Rishi's spirit must have felt supposing it was hovering about the stage at that time. This is the depth of degradation into which we have fallen. *When shall we open our eyes and begin to see, speak, and think as Hindus?*

While we seek and insist upon our due share in the State patronage, it is equally our duty to see that no undue and unjust preference be given to foreign ideas, foreign letters, and a foreign language. We ought to protest emphatically against the position occupied by Urdu as Court language. The result under the present arrangement is doubly disastrous. Hindu youths, in order to secure official posts, are compelled to learn Urdu and therewith Persian to the exclusion of Sanskrit, the sacred language, while the growth of their mother tongue, the Panjabi, is being hopelessly retarded owing to artificial patronage in favour of Urdu. It is complained that there is no indigenous literature worth the name in the Panjabi. This complaint is not strictly correct. In spite of the cold and indifference given to it hitherto, it has under the warmth of religious fervour developed respectable literature in matters of philosophy and kindred subjects. But how can a literature truly grow up without royal favour? History repeats itself and does not falsify its lessons. The best products of any literature were the growth and result of times when Kings and Emperors

bestowed their lavish gifts on literary accomplishments. Whatever progress Panjabi made, it made during the transitory Sikh period when royal favours were shown to Granthis and Gyanis. It is therefore no wonder that its progress ceased with the stoppage of official patronage. This is a matter in which we stand on absolutely just and right ground, and yet the Muhammadans are making frantic efforts to retain an advantage obtained by chance. Their efforts in this respect seem to be suicidal, but yet through blind prejudice they will not see the advantage. Panjabi is the language of the home and hearth without any distinction of creed. If it contains within its bosom the sacred *shabads* sung by the Gurus, it has given an equally touching expression to *kafis* and *marsiya*s of the Muhammadan faith. Why then leave in neglect our mother-tongue in favour of an exotic idiom? If it does not contain decent literature in matters other than religious, whose fault is it? The position adopted by the Muhammadans in this respect is entirely weak and hopeless. They are confronted with the naked truth that Urdu is not the language of the people and they can't possibly gainsay it. But still to adhere to a hopeless position they have raised the question of characters, as if Persian characters are more indigenous and better suited to express Panjabi sounds than the Gurmukhi or Hindi. This is the length to which our friends are prepared to press in order to urge separation. Hindi and Sanskrit must be shunned as pollution to touch, but Panjabi is sucked in with mother's milk and cannot be avoided. There the indigenous characters must be tabooed as heterodox. May I ask these learned gentlemen if English characters are orthodox, and what is there in the Gurmukhi characters to make them untouchable? Surely it will not make a person less orthodox Muhammadan if instead of **ਮ** **ਭ** he learns **म**, **भ**, and **ड**. But the prejudice is there and deep rooted, and tries unconsciously even to find its justification. Some Muhammadan gentlemen complain against Hindu

upport. But what conceivable justification can there exist for avoiding the Gurmukhi characters as a pollution? Panjabi may be taught in schools and be a subject for examination ; for Muhammadans the characters must, however, be Persian ! This is the latest development of a desire for unification evinced by the Muslim community, and it is answered by the Hindus by flocking in thousands and tens of thousands to learn the Persian characters, not merely to seek posts but to afford them matter for recreation in after-life !

In my last letter I stated that the position assumed by the Government in the matter of encouragement of Oriental languages is impartial excepting as regards Urdu in this Province, where without just cause it is declared and enforced as the Court language. The declaration and practice is due to pure chance, but the fault lies in adhering to the error when the matter is so palpably clear. Urdu by no means is the language of the people of the Province, to whatever religious faith they belong. Both justice and reason require that the language of Courts should be the language of the people. This is the right principle adopted and acted upon in other Provinces, and there is no good reason why it should be deviated from in the land of the Five Rivers. On the other hand, as I pointed out, the encouragement given to Persian is due entirely to our own fault, and we cannot blame the Government for it. Our weakness in this matter is responded to by the Muhammadans by pressing that even Panjabi should be taught and examined in Persian characters. This is the latest development of the Muhammadan attitude of reconciliation towards the Hindus. The Government, however, stands impartial in the matter of the study of Oriental languages, and but recently gave further proof of such unbiassed attitude in the matter of the establishment of foreign scholarships for the study of Sanskrit and Arabic outside India. The proportion fixed is three to 1 *i. e.*, three for Sanskrit and one for Arabic. Now this is about the right proportion in accordance with the numerical strength of the two main communities, and Government has acted only with justice in adopting it as the basis for awarding such scholarships. The award, moreover, indicates conclusively

patronage. But the wonder is that while the the Government has vouchsafed to apply the right principle in a small matter, it shrinks from acting upon it in more important and vital concerns. I do not for a moment imagine that the Government has fixed this proportion in awarding foreign scholarships for the study of Sanskrit and Arabic under the belief that Hindus are more bigoted than the Muhammadans and thus require more of the Western breeze to soften their indigenous stiffness. If this were the consideration, the proportions would have been just the reverse. For in religious intolerance surely the Maulvi beats the Pandit easily and carries the palm. The proportion, therefore, has obviously been fixed with due regard to the numerical strength and importance of the two communities in the country. If so, why limit its application to a puny matter only? Why not appoint members to the Council of the Secretary of State, Members in the Legislative Council in India, Members in the Executive Councils, Judges of the High Courts and other high and low offices in accordance with the same principle? If appointments were made with sole regard to qualifications, there would be no just ground for complaint, but if matters of creed form a consideration then the principle of numerical strength is the only proper alternative to follow. And even take an instance educational. If foreign scholarships for Sanskrit and Arabic are awarded in proportion of three to one, is there any reason why the Jubilee Scholarships should be awarded exclusively to Muhammadans and not in the same proportion to both the communities?

Turning, again, from matters educational to matters political, take the instance of appointments made in the Native States by the British Government. I am not aware how the matters stand in other provinces; but taking our own as a typical instance, there are two principal States, Hindu and Muhammadan connected with our Province.

In the one, for several years past, it has been the policy to appoint one Muhammadan Minister, whereas evidently no Hindoo Minister was appointed in the other State. Now, I wish to make one thing quite clear in this connection before commenting further. In both the States, just as in other there are Hindoo and Muhammadan subjects in more or less proportions, but the sovereignty is exclusively either Hindoo or Muhammadan. If a Hindoo or a Muhammadan subject in any of these States rises by loyalty, merit, or past service to a position of distinction such as that of a Minister, there would be absolutely no ground of complaint. It is a matter which has always occurred in history and must occur as long as States and sovereignties last. Merit is rewarded without distinction of creed and religious faith. Akbar had his Birbal and Todar Mal and Hindoo Governors of Cabul, as your local Muhammadan contemporary very recently pointed out. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had his Fakir family and Shaikhs administering large tracts and the Nawab of Hyderabad has his Maharaja Kishen Kishor. And as an instance, of yesterday only the British Government has appointed Mr. Sinha as a Member of the Executive Council of the Viceroy. It is a matter for sincere congratulation, indeed, but not without precedent and so extraordinary as to require the skies to be rent with loud hallelujahas for British munificence.

It is a simple maxim based on self-interest that it is impossible for a sovereign State to rule over an alien community without having advantage of the advice of some of its competent and representative members. This is a principle which ought to have been recognised long ago as a part of the British administration, but has now been recognised very tardily and slowly. It is fortunate for the

enforce it by introducing the Indian element in the Executive Councils of the Government. He is on the right path so far, and this is a matter for congratulation both to the governed and the governors. The truth having after all been perceived, it is unnecessary to refer to the sufferings and the causes which have rendered the recognition possible. But the position I take up is that such appointments occur in the ordinary course, not merely as rewards for loyalty, but for self-preservation. You cannot for any length of time successfully govern an alien community by creating an iron wall of separation between themselves and yourself. If therefore a Muhammadan were to rise to eminence in the Hindu State, even to the post of Prime Minister, by merit and services, there would be no possible ground for making a complaint. A thing of this sort has occurred and is occurring in other States equally. But the grievance is where a Muhammadan simply as a Muhammadan is imposed upon the State by the suzerain power under pressure of agitation by the Muhammadan community in British India. Here a wrong is done to begin with. It is assumed that the Native State concerned is incapable of impartially looking after the interests of his Muhammadan subjects. This is an unmerited slur cast unconsciously by the suzerain State on the feudatory. What would the British Government think if a Hindu Ruler of a Native State were to suggest to the Government that in order to look after the interests of its Hindu subjects the Government be pleased to appoint a Hindu Minister to its Executive Council? The suggestion would be branded at once as an impertinence, and it would be retorted that it means an insult as if the British Government does not care and was not prepared to look after the interests of its Hindu subjects. Does not the same principle of decency apply equally when a Mohammadan

is sent out as a Minister to a Hindu State to look after the interests of its Mohammadan subjects? If a Mohammadan were sent out in the ordinary course as a qualified man, irrespective of the consideration that he is a Mohammadan there would and ought to be no complaint. But it is simply unjust and unbecoming to do so persistently as a matter of settled policy. If however, it is to be done as a matter of policy, then I say let it be done with equal justice. Let Hindu Ministers be sent to Mohammadan States to look after the interests of their Hindu subjects. Why send a Mohammadan Minister to a Hindu State and no Hindu to a Mohammadan is a matter which passes ordinary comprehension. The instance of Hyderabad is always quoted by our Mohammadan friends as of a prominent Hindu Minister in a Mohammadan State. But as I have already pointed out and to use once legal language, "it has no bearing." That is not a case of appointment by the suzerain power, but of the rise to eminence of a subject of the State by loyalty and services.

There are similar instances of rise of Mohammadans in Hindu States, for instance in Patiala and Kapurthala. But no one ever thinks of them. The complaint is when there is unequal interference by the suzerain power in appointing Ministers to Native States on the main, if not pure consideration of creed and faith to look after the interests of their co-religionists. The evil in this case is very serious. Not only the matter is unjust from the standpoint of unequal distribution, but it introduces the pernicious principle of religious antagonism in the administration of Native States, a policy which is already producing its bitter fruit under the British Indian Government. It is already rendering the



for the downfall of the Mughal Empire, but it does amount to an undue encouragement of members of one religious community, perhaps, from honest motives which cannot in justice be appreciated by the injured and the aggrieved community. The evil yet is not of a very long standing. Its life probably is coeval with the history of the Congress and it can yet be stemmed if a *bonafide* effort were made to do so. Its evil efforts are sometimes reflected even in a change of religious persuasion. It is not an easy matter to obtain instances of this description. For a person who changes his religious faith in order to gain worldly advantages is not likely to admit his weakness to others, and particularly to members of his former faith. But I will here refer to two instances, one particular and the other general one. Readers of the *Punjabee* are probably not unaware of the circumstances in life of L. Harvas Ram who is now dead and was an E. A. C. at one time. When a student he changed his religion and became a Mohammadan. He passed high examination in Persian and Arabic from the Oriental College and ultimately by nomination or by competition (I don't remember which) he came to be appointed as an E. A. C. while in service he renounced Islam and was readmitted to Hindu society as a Hindu after purification. But inspite of his reconversion to Hinduism he still retained his Mohammadan name Abdul Aziz, because he said it paid him to be known to Government as a Mohammadan. As a general instance, it was the impression at one time (I have verified how far it is correct that Sikhs could be recruited in the army irrespective of caste ; for instance, a Khatri who would not be taken in the army on account of his caste would be gladly admitted as a soldier of His Majesty if he grew long hair.

And the result of the impression was that number of Khattris in a certain District began to grow long hair (though not Sikhs by faith) to earn the qualification for an

enlistment in the army. This is an aspect of the question which is probably unknown to the Government and not thought of, but there can be no doubt that it has an important bearing if the impression were to prevail that members of a particular religious community are in special favour. It is not an altogether new matter. Religious conversion is not always due to mere change in religious faith. Weak minds are not unoften swayed by irreligious considerations, and a fitness to receive State patronage is not the least among them. It is impossible to refer to statistics in this matter, but there can be no doubt that considerable number of conversions to Islam during the Mohammadan period were due to this cause in the main.

And even more recently some took to growing long hair in order to obtain favours at the hands of the Khalsa Government. This is an inherent weakness, deplorable indeed, but none the less existent; and an impartial Government which is scrupulous not to give an impression that it favours its own creed ought not to be less scrupulous to avoid an impression that its policy encourages the creed of a particular community. And yet the result must be otherwise if the present policy is adhered to. What will be the effect on ignorant minds if an impression were to prevail, as in fact it is gaining ground, that a Mohammadan gets an easier access to recruitment in the Police Department than a Hindu. Statistics are not available, but the impression is widespread and not without foundation. A respectable gentleman in high service in the United Provinces, now retired, once stated that the same impression existed among the people of his own Province. It is true that in some departments, at the present moment Hindus do preponderate but efforts are not wanting to

these posts and offices because they were Hindus in faith, but because they were found fit and qualified to perform the particular functions. Can it be said that the Moham-madans are enlisted in the Police Department for the same reason? The function of a Policeman or Police Officer is very peculiar. It doubtless sometimes requires sort of qualifications which are not very enviable. But men of these qualifications are not to be found exclusively or in large numbers among Mohammadans. It is a very important Department and the most in touch with the people. It would be digression on my part to dwell on the necessity of its improvement. But what concerns my argument most is that for the very reason that it yields such influence with the people it is absolutely desirable and necessary that it should represent in its ranks a due proportion of the numerical strength of the two communities. If there is any need for insisting upon any such principle in any department, it is in the Police. For the police comes in daily direct contact with the people. It is the guardians of peace in the truest sense of the term, and therefore no particular community ought to have the main monopoly, otherwise there is great danger of injustice, corruption and oppression. I have too far, I am afraid, encroached on your space in this letter and must stop here to pursue the thread of my argument in my next.

## VIII.

In my last letter I adverted to the growing preponderance of the Muslim element in the Police Department. This circumstance is a serious matter and deserves more than passing attention. The police come more in direct touch with the people than any other Government Department, even including the Revenue. The latter has to deal with only one community, the rural; the Police rules both the rural and the urban. If, therefore, there is any need of due and proper representation of the communities anywhere, it is here. Mr. Gokhale who with his catholicity and broad-mindedness has propounded views directly opposed to those of his own community, for which he has drawn encomiums from high quarters, may get passed any number of laws in his expanded Councils. But the effect of these will be insignificant as compared with the influence which a *Thanedar* wields within his jurisdiction. When he seizes a *Lambardar* and gives him shoe-beating or a pull by his beard; or when on the scent of a serious case he visits the villages and places constables at the door of a respectable *Shahukar* then it is that the real Government discloses itself, and not so much in the laws contained in the Statute Book or in the brain of the Legal Member. The view which some of our leaders have taken as regards the importance and need of entering Government service is indeed rather surprising. In a very recent issue the *Bengalee* writes :

We speak the mind of our Hindu fellow-countrymen when we say that we have no objection to preferential treatment of Mohammadaus in the matter of public appointments.

and the introduction of new ones. We care not whether a few posts are taken away from one community and given to another. For, after all, how many posts are there in the Government service, how many mouths will they fill, how many families will they support? Industrialism is the watchword of the hour. It will feed our half-starved people and bring joy and peace and happiness to our homes. Of course, we desire to have a substantial share in the Government of the country, but that means that we should fill some of the highest offices which will not only give us a share in the control of our affairs, but will enhance our self respect, quicken our power of initiative and strengthen our manhood.

The *Bengalee* may here be giving the mind of Hindus of Eastern Bengal, through I am extremely doubtful whether he has done so correctly. But I can assert it with certainty that he has not given the mind of his Hindu brethren elsewhere. The whole para. seems to me to contain a tissue of fallacies, which are simply amazing. I am here again reminded of the spirit of pseudo-Vedantism which your Mahommadan contemporary pointed out as an evil that has seized the Hindu brains, and the para. I have quoted is a decisive proof of the spirit of Self-Abnegation in politics of which I have complained and do complain so bitterly. According to the Editor "there is no objection to preferential treatment of Mohammadans in the matter of public appointments." And this statement is made as the result of the change of opinion within the last three or four years. I am afraid it is a case of grapes being too sour, and the change is not improbably due to the Partition. It, at any rate, remarkably coincides in time-limit with that measure. But to be serious, is this the right position to be taken up by the Hindu community? It is said we ought to take to industries. No one is more zealous in the cause of indigenous industries than the writer of these lines. He does not deprecate them and regrets that Hindus are exceedingly backward in this

mat'or, specially as regards hand industries. This is peculiarly the case in this province where in many arts the Hindu is simply *non est*. But Government service has an importance of its own which cannot be deprecated except as a matter of suicidal policy. In the first place, a desire for Government service encourages the study of learning. Learning for its own sake is a myth and a fiction under the circumstances, at least in this country. If the doors of Government service were closed against the Hindus or the Hindus ever took to the fatal idea to boycott Government service, I am sure our classes in Schools and Colleges will be depleted in a week. People desire to learn and improve their learning generally in proportion to their ambition to acquire or rise in the Government service. And this is exactly the reason which has now forced the Mohammadan population to the Schools and Colleges. They shunned English Education evidently for a time through religious prejudice, but finding that ignorance meant exclusion from Government service they have zealously taken to learning, not for learning's sake, but in order to qualify for Government service. Instead of profiting by the past experience of the other community, the Hindu leaders want now to retrace their steps and fall back into the disastrous position hitherto occupied by the Mohammadans. In the next place, and this is a matter of even greater importance, Government service teaches the art of governance. Is it imagined that by shunning Government service and taking to industries we would be able to qualify ourselves better for Self-Government? If there is any such idea it is contrary to all sound experience. The position is evidently conceded for.

To return to the *Bengalee*:

in the control of our affairs but will enhance our self-respect quicken our power of initiative and strengthen our manhood.

The writer of this para, seems to have been under some hallucination when penning it. He appears to think as if the highest offices are like mere toys which may be grasped at according to the sweet will and pleasure of the Hindu community. If there is one rigid rule and a correct rule too, of Government service applicable even to the members of the Civil Service, it is that you must rise to the highest office from the lowest. With very few exceptions of direct appointments from England, which as a matter of fact are not open to the people of this country, in all others the rule is a gradual rise.

An Assistant Commissioner after thirty years' service may become a Financial Commissioner or a Member of the Board of Revenue or a Lieutenant-Governor, but it is unknown that he ever jumped into these offices at the very start. And look at the members of our own community, a number of whom have risen to high administrative posts. They have done so only from low positions with which they started in life. The instances are numerous and it would be waste of pen and ink to enumerate them. Whether in the Accounts Department or the Police or the Railway or the P. W. D. or Forest or Judicial, the rise has invariably been from the lower to higher. I do not count the appointments of Legal Practitioners even to the High Courts as exceptions, for there the rise begins in a legal profession which is regarded—as semiofficial. It is, therefore an utter fallacy to deprecate the lower appointments as undesirable and to concede a preference therein to the Mohammadans. Not only do these form the stepping-stones to the highest appointments; not only do they give experience which is otherwise unattainable but they exercise an inconceivable amount of influence over the fate of the community. Take even the most minor appointment on the Revenue side.

*viz.*, that of the village Patwari and look to the influence which he wields for the good or evil of the village folk. This is a truth which has been preceived by the Mohammadans and they are trying heart and soul to profit by it, but our leaders are trying to cover it under a heap of sophistry to the permanent prejudice and detriment of the Hindu community. I will not multiply instances which are most familiar to the readers of the *Punjabee*, but I may mention here that, on a certain occasion a Mohammadan gentleman of high position was overheard bragging to a member of his own community that in assessing Income Tax he had cut the throats (*gala kat diya*) of the Hindus. And yet we are asked to shun the Government service and willingly concede preference to members of the other community.

There is one aspect of Government service which is not infrequently set against it, and that is its demoralising influence. To me this appears an entire fallacy. There is doubtless some need of an accommodation to the sentiments and policy of the Government if one takes up Government service. But this is true of *higher* appointments only and is considerably exaggerated. The whole thing depends upon the individual. There are independent men and the reverse, not only in Government service but even in what are known and called as the independent professions. Are there not members of the Bar who have risen in wealth and practice by dancing attendance on the local *hazoor*, and should the profession of law be damned and deprecated for that reason? And have not even independent members of the profession sometimes to accommodate themselves to the whims of the Judge, in order to maintain their position?



to procure a market for his outturns? This is a matter of daily experience everywhere. It is not known how contractors rise into millionaires? I here refer to only one aspect of the moral debasement which characterises an industry occasionally in order to be able to sell its product. As for trade tricks the less said the better. The charge therefore that there is greater debasement in Government service than in professions and industries appears to me to be unfounded.

And the benefit which a Government servant is in a position to confer on his countrymen in the performance of his duties is altogether ignored. I do not for a moment refer to or approve of illegitimate use of power. This I deprecate emphatically whether the influence be used for good or for evil. But even in the legitimate and proper exercise of powers there is a range of discretion which may well be utilized for the benefit of the people. A Revenue officer who makes fair assessments; a Canal officer who allows liberal use of the water at his disposal; a Forest Official who can allow Forest produce to be used in time of need; a Tehsildar who is just and not harsh in the assessment of the Income-tax; a Jailor or a judicial officer who uses wise and human discretion in awarding punishment can do more good than many a philanthropist can do even in his life-time. If the amount of benefit which may be realised is not attained, it is not the fault of the service. I do not for a moment believe that Government wants only tyrants and oppressors in its service. If it did, it would not last or deserve to last. Government is guilty occasionally of winking at faults and not meting out proper punishments to the delinquents. But so far as the people are concerned the remedy does not lie in shunning the service but in improving it—in fact, in putting it in the hands of independent, impartial, benevolent, just and kind-hearted members. For Local Self-Government there is a cry to render it successful by introducing improved agency. Why not

use the same method for improving Government service? The analogy between the two is close. Both are mere means for one common purpose, *viz* the service of the people, one in semi-dependent and the other in an entirely dependent position. But neither need be exclusively an end unto itself. One earns emoluments and occasionally honour; the other honour only; but both are honourable if they properly serve the end and either is dishonourable in proportion as it falls away from that ideal. And again would the evil be mitigated by leaving the field open to the other community, or as the "Bengalee" says, by giving the preference to Muhaamadans? Would it not, on the other hand, redouble the misery? If Hindus cannot secure justice and kindness at the hands of members of their own community, do they expect to get the same from members of the other community? Hindus may try the experiment and in a week the community will be simply pulverised between two millstones. It is really wonderful how far the spirit of Self-abnegation has siezed upon the Hindu nervous system. The other communities would only be too glad to step into our places if we once make up our minds to vacate them.

There is one other aspect of Government service which is wholly ignored in discussing the matter. It is the emoluments which it pays. It is very well to speak glibly of starting industries; but industries cannot be started without capital, and Government service is one of the most convenient means of accumulating such capital. Some people seem to have no idea of what emoluments in Government service mean. Take the ordinary instance of a judicial officer drawing Rs. 500 in the lowest grade. This is a post which may be attained with a fair amount of ability after after 10 to 15 years' service and passing the competitive examination. It requires very little capital to start with.

Rs. 500 per mensem regularly during the whole year and and from year to year? And while a judicial officer may rise to Rs. 1,200 or even 1,500 with respectable pension at the end of the service to fall back upon, the trader may run the risk of losing the whole of his capital at the end and be compelled to file his schedule in the Insolvency Court. I have taken this only as a typical instance, but there are hundreds and thousands of posts ranging in pay from Rs. 100 to Rs. 1,000, but for which the incumbents would not have been able even to make the two ends meet, far less to obtain capital for starting industries. Is this all to be abandoned from patriotic motives and relinquished in favour of the other community? The Industries may or may not be started and may or may not flourish, but by giving up the vantage ground here held, the community would certainly be thrown back in influence, affluence, and preparation for the art of Government.

It will, moreover, deprive us of all sources of doing good which seems to be essentially bound up with partaking in the administration of the country. I am not against industries nor trade nor independent profession nor against learning for its own sake. These are all very desirable and necessary adjuncts of peaceful progress of a nation and should all be pursued with the best possible zeal and exertion. But what I complain of is the noxious preaching which unduly deprecates Government service or advises conceding preference to the other community. This I regard as harmful in the extreme. The ideal in practice ought to be a division of labour. While a portion of the community engages in trade, another portion ought to take fair share in the administration, though under the circumstances in a dependent position. In matters educational we substitute the Boarding House, the Boarding School and and the National School for the pure and pristine *Brahm-chari* Ashram because we feel compelled to accomodate

ourselves to the modern circumstances. If we were to follow the old system literally, English literature and European Science ought to have no place in these seminaries where the *Upanishdas*, *Vedas* and *Vedanagas* ought to have the sole and supreme sway. But this is held to be impossible. Why not use the same flexibility, the pliant conscience, in matters administrative? *Self-abnegation in politics is Sanyas*, no doubt, but it is misplaced and ill-timed and it is suicidal and ruinous, when it implies the displacement of one community by other to the ruin of the community practising *Self-abnegation*. Politics are essential as ably pointed out by "Candid Friend" and "Plain Truth" and I hope to advert to this matter later but taking share in administration, even in an humble position, is not less essential and is in one sense practice in politics.

From the Province of Five rivers, let us for a moment turn our attention to the condition of our Hindu brethren across the *Sindhu* river and see how they are faring there and are being looked after. The Frontier Province, as it is called, was only a few years ago an adjunct of our Province but it was separated, I apprehend, under the same stroke of policy which divided Bengal into separate portions. The object in one case evidently was to weaken the Hindu consolidation by creating a strong Mohammadan Province on the flank. The ostensible object in the other case doubtless was to strengthen the Frontier administration by creating a direct agency on the spot. And if the aim of the policy initiated on the Frontier stopped short at that there could be no legitimate ground of complaint. Questions of the Frontier policy mainly affect the governing race and the subject race has hardly any concern therewith, or any reason to look into them. Even Mr. Gokhale's expanded Councils cannot be permitted to pry into them too closely. So far there could not be, nor there is, any grievance. But the policy initiated by Lord Curzon had deeper roots and ramifications. Apparently the author of the Partition of Bengal did not mean merely to transfer control of Frontier affairs from the hands of the Provincial to the Central Government. He wished further to create a province with exclusive preponderance of Mohammadan interests, and this is a matter of legitimate and proper grievance to the Hindus. For centuries the Hindus had made the Frontier Province their home. The whole province was theirs doubtless at one time, and even recently, not more than three quarters of a century ago, it was under

the previous times, and for argument's sake I would willingly throw into oblivion the days of Hari Singh Nalwa. Still in spite of Mohammadan preponderance in population, there can be no doubt that many Hindu families and specially Sikhs are settled in the cities and rural parts of the Frontier Province. These have lived there for years, not improbably they are the remnants of Hindu ancestors who staunch in their religious faith, did not yield to the wave of conversion to Islam. And by following peaceful pursuits in life, as is their wont, they have in many cases acquired wealth, and position in life. They are sons of the soil and entitled atleast to an equal protection for life and property. What is the actual condition of affairs however? Neither property nor life is secure, and instances where Hindus alone have been kidnapped across the Frontier are matters of familiar knowledge to every reader of the *Punjabee*. Is this the return which the Government makes for the taxes it receives? If there is one matter which a Government is pre-eminently bound to look after it is the protection of life and property, and where a Government fails here it fails to justify its existence. The plea that the Frontier is too extensive to be adequately protected at every point has no force. The Frontier was not less extensive before its separation, and yet the raids against Hindus which are frequent now-a-days were comparatively very rare at the time. The real mischief lies in the initiation of a policy of giving undue encouragement to one community against the other. No sooner it becomes known and it does not take much time to spread such news that Government wishes to encourage one community and to say the least is apathetic to the interests of the other, then the results such as we find here must follow with the same certitude as that gun powder would explode when fire is applied to it. This happened in Eastern Bengal where a pro-Muhammadan

policy was initiated soon after the Partition. Riots by Mohammadans became the order of the day, with the result that Hindus men and women, were maltreated and outraged. The evil there was however soon stopped. There was the criminal law machinery ready at hand and it soon acted as an antidote to the policy of class favour, so far as commission of offence was concerned. But the same machinery is not available in the Frontier Provinces. Here the raiders are not amenable easily to criminal law. They can raid, murder, loot and kidnap, and in a couple of hours are across the boundary lines snapping their fingers at the Police and military equally. Here District Magistrates cannot issue a warrant to arrest the accused and put them in custody to take their trial before the British Law Courts. The machinery to be applied in this case is more unwieldy and cannot be put in force without the previous sanction of the Secretary of State. And the Secretary of State is afraid to give sanction, partly on account of expenditure an expedition would involve and partly because he dare not reverse the policy of Lord Curzon. So that between fear on one side and intrepidity on the other the Hindus must suffer and suffer miserably.

When I speak of pro-Islamic policy on the Frontier Province I am not drawing on mere imagination. The Government there does not care to conceal its views under meaningless platitudes, and so far it is more outspoken and straightforward than other Provincial Governments, not excepting our own, where the recent utterances on the language question have given characteristic proofs of indecision and weakness. The Frontier Government, however, is possessed of youthful vigour and seems to have fully imbibed the spirit of the invigorating climate of the

press its views in decisive language to the Hindus and against the Hindus. These are plainly told that the Province is a Mohammadan Province and Hindus have no right or equity to participate in the administration. And this is not a mere empty threat. It is actually carried out with deliberation, and its consequences are apparent on the face of the list for the Provincial Service. Out of the graded posts in the Provincial Service, 5 are held by the Mohammadans and only 1 by a Hindu. Is this the proper ratio in accordance with importance and education of the two communities? Unquestionably it is not. It is doubtless in accord with the ratio of numerical strength of the two communities in the Frontier Province. Granted. But then why not apply the same principle to Madras, Bombay and the United Provinces? Are the appointments conferred in these Provinces on the basis of numerical proportion? Certainly not. The position then is this. *Where the Mohammadans preponderate in numerical strength they get the lion's share in the administration on the basis of their numerical strength. Where they are in poor minority, they get a share on the ground of political importance.* And as I have remarked, in the Frontier Province the policy is not marked as confidential; nor does it stand in need of confidential circulars and instructions. The matter is talked openly and Hindus are reminded, not unoften, that they will get a share only in proportion of their numbers. There is no wonder then that with such treatment at the hands of their Government, and put as it were between two fires, the Hindus have become awe-stricken. But recently a certain gentleman of the Frontier Province, when requested to join a certain deputation, declined to do so on the ground that his Governor was a Mohammadan. And contrast this feeling with the feeling of Hindus towards a Governor who is a Mohammadan, not in mere policy, but in bone, flesh and blood, and to



boot a Mohammadan with very orthodox views. There are colonies of Hindus at Cabul and in other trade centres of Afghanistan and large numbers visit the territory of His Majesty the King of Cabul annually for trade purposes. "Observer" does not boast of possessing a very retentive memory, but he is not likely to miss an observation touching the welfare of his community if it ever reached his ears and he can say that he has hitherto never heard even a whisper uttered against His Majesty as regards unequal and partial treatment of Hindus. Nay, according to the latest news two Hindus were appointed as representatives on the Committee to investigate the conspiracy against His Majesty. The British Government is very strong in its tales of bayonets and forts full of gunpowder, but it would do well to note and lay to heart this contrast in the feeling. The idea, I should say the sentiment, is rapidly gaining ground that the treatment of the two communities is unfair and unequal. What its consequences would be is beyond the ken of "Observer" who merely notes facts as they occur. But Lord Curzon and Lord Dufferin who initiated the policy ought to have foreseen them and statesmen like Lords Morley and Minto who evidently adhere to it and encourage it in practice ought to see them.

But what have our own leaders done to mitigate the sufferings of their Hindu brethren on the Frontier Province? They are excused, of course, on one ground. They were busy with hatching schemes for and producing expanded Legislative Councils. They believed these were the sole remedy for all Indian sufferings. And how could, they spend time and brain for anything else in the presence of such all comprehensive panacea? Here their prayer has been granted, though some people think that the little good the expanded Councils were expected to achieve has been nullified by the clever bureaucracy by accentuating

the feeling of jealousy between Hindus and Mohammadans. However, even an empty resolution would have given some solace to the Hindus of the Frontier Province in the belief that they too had some supporters at their back. Resolutions are passed to protect the Indians in the Transvaal where the majority are Mohammadans, of course, because they are not merely Hindus; but the Hindus of the Frontier are left to stew in their own juice. And yet "Candid Friend" takes me to task for blaming the Congress. I hope to do my best soon to satisfy him. But meanwhile may I express a wish that the Congress session promised this year at the capital of the Province will rise to the needs of the times and pass a resolution for equal and just treatment of the Hindus of the Frontier Province? I apprehend that the proposal would be opposed on the ground that it smells of narrowness and sectarianism, but I hope that the Hindus of the Province will try to do their duty towards their brethren on the Frontier. The Resolution need not however be of the character of the resolutions passed in 1897 and 1898 relating to the Frontier policy. There is a little book prepared by Mr. Gokhale (not Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale) styled Indian National Congress, and I readily acknowledge the great service done to the cause by this compilation. The book shows the Congress at a glance with all its achievements. It is a sort of mirror through which you can see the Congress from head to foot. I might hereafter examine the same more closely. But for the purpose in hand, on reading the Index, I find there is no resolution relating to the Frontier Hindus but there are two relating to the Frontier policy. Wise men! They thought as if the Government would regulate its Frontier policy by taking notes of speeches made in the Congress Pandit. Resolution No. 1 of 1897 expressed its deep and earnest conviction that the present Frontier Policy was injurious as it involved frequent military expeditions.

entreated the British nation to supply funds for the expeditions! Resolution No. 7 of 1898 repeated the deep and earnest conviction against military expeditions on the frontier, modified the previous demand for pecuniary contribution by asking only for an adequate share, and fulminated against holding in readiness a considerable body of troops on the Frontier. And, by a curious coincidence, this was the very year when by resolution V, a respectable welcome was accorded to Lord Curzon and his Lordship's words of sympathy for the people of India were noted with gratitude! Lord Curzon did reverse the Frontier policy, and his Lordship is never tired of boasting that it is one of his greatest achievements. But with the result that the Frontier Province was separated from the Punjab and Hindus there were relegated to a very small minority and thrown at the mercy of the Executive or the raiders from across the Frontier. Regular troops were withdrawn from the Frontier posts as even suggested by the Congress, and tribal levies were substituted in their place with the consequence that marauders naturally became emboldened when they had only to cross the beats of tribal levies instead of regular troops, and Hindus,—men, women and children—were kidnapped. I do not for a moment believe that the Congress resolutions, in any manner, affected the Frontier policy of the Government. The view taken of the Congress by the Central Government is characteristically described, in the words of Lord Dufferin, as recently quoted by Lord Macdonell in his short history of the Reform Scheme namely, that the aim of the Congress leaders had been "to sit in the seat of phætan and guide the chariot of the sun." But anyhow the Congress willingly bound itself hand and foot and could not thereafter utter a word against the Frontier policy.

National Congress. There is no resolution after 1898 on the Frontier policy. So the Congress conscience was fully pacified and nothing more remained to be done. What does it matter if they themselves advocated a policy which is ruinous to Hindu interests? When they were drafting those verbose resolutions, did they ever think what bearing these would have on Hindu interests? Did they then think that by withdrawing regular troops and substituting tribal levies, Hindus who constituted a helpless minority would be dangerously and ruinously exposed to murderous outrages? They thought anyhow money would be saved, but it did not occur to them that even more would be spent on redistribution of strategy; and yet with a pliant conscience they go on passing resolutions to protest against the treatment accorded to Indians in the Colonies, as if these deserve better care, notice and attention, than the Hindus of the Frontier Province.

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## X.

It is full three months since I published my first letter under the heading which marks the present tenth in number. Several criticisms have appeared since then—some agreeing and some disagreeing with the views expressed by me. I have purposely avoided noticing the adverse criticisms as I had a set object in view. I wished to make my position clear by quoting a few prominent instances of how the Hindu community had suffered under the present policy. *I also intended and I have evidently succeeded partly to instill into the Hindu mind what some people choose to call sectarianism; but which I regard as the very breath of life, viz., that a Hindu should not only believe but make it a part and parcel of his organism, of his life and of his conduct, that he is a Hindu first and an Indian after.* Here I wished to reverse the dominant idea propounded by the Congress that we are Indians first and Hindus next, and that even if need should be. I therefore attacked the Congress and I did so deliberately. For to my mind the fundamental idea on which the Congress began its work and has carried on its propaganda was that of a united Indian nation as the basal premises of all reforms.

This idea was scouted from the very start by the Mohammadans in spite of devices adopted to induce them to join. The Hindus willingly and readily adopted the idea and acted upon it even to the extent of political effacement as Hindus. But the end was and has been a total failure. I have therefore advocated dispensing with the Congress as a force which has already spent itself. The failure of Congress may be due, as, "Plain Truth believes, to a combination of Government and Mohammadans or it may be due to

complains so bitterly. But whatever be the cause if the consequence is what I assert it to be, then it is absolutely essential, at least in self-interest and needs of political sagacity, to forego the Congress. There is no use playing any longer with a shot that has already spent its force. It is simply puerile. I may be pardoned for using the expression. It will startle many a mind and many a public organ which are Congress-ridden. It has already disturbed the equanimity of the *Indian People*, as naturally it might, being antagonistic to its established ideal. But it seems to me necessary to probe in spite of the pain that the process is likely to cause. For I believe it is time now for self-examination. *We must see if we are proceeding on right lines, or at least see if some cancerous growth has not seized the Hindu body politic.* If Government and Mohammadans have combined to wreck the Congress, then it is surely a hopeless task to revive it. If the result is due to Hindu vacillation and weakness, then it is not likely to inspire greater warmth in the Hindus in future. For it appeals to a sentiment which has yet to grow, ignores the natural line of action, and has landed the Hindu in a position of defeat and disaster which, if he has any sense of self-respect left in him, will deter him from repeating the attempt.

The fact that the Punjab Hindus are politically very weak, and not that they are in a state of complete disorganisation is so patent that it would be a pure waste of time to labour this point. There can be no two opinions about their present unenviable position, and it is not in regard to this matter that I wish to say anything. It is about the causes which have chiefly contributed to produce this state of affairs that I venture to differ from "Observer." As one who has perhaps never taken any considerable part in the Congress, he attributes the whole evil to the Congress propaganda. He seems to think that by placing wrong ideal of a fancied Indian Unity before the Hindus, the Congress has prevented the latter from developing that sense of communal solidarity and union without which no community can command any respect anywhere. But my friend forgets that only a few Hindus from our Province ever took part in the Congress; and even when they mustered in their strongest, their interest in that institution was more or less of a languid character. They attended the Congress meetings more out of curiosity and amusement; and far from their divergent and unsettled views influencing, in any appreciable degree, the general trend of thought among the Hindus, the political life of the latter flowed on as usual in its old channel. The Congress politics never even once evoked any general sympathy among the educated Hindus of the Province.

The Punjab Hindu has been for ages an extremely selfish creature, and in the majority of cases, education has, by increasing his wants and raising his standard of comfort, only accentuated this trait in him. He has been always looking up to the officials for everything, and his one marked feature has been his great anxiety to secure official favours. If there is anything that has ever called forth any enthusiasm in him, it is the prospect of basking under the sunshine of official smiles. The educated Hindu has, in this respect, not been less guilty than his unsophisticated brother.

Again :

It is, as I have said, these men who in the past have ruined our cause, and it is men of this type who are again pressing forward probably to involve us in greater ruin.

"Observer" has thought fit to lay the whole blame of the political weakness of Hindus at the Congress door. But are not his doughty lieutenants following exactly the same policy in the matter of Exhibition that is intended to be held in this Province in December next ?

"Plain Truth" says in his first article :—

While reading the articles published in the *Punjabee* from "Observer" under the heading of "Self-Abnegation in Politics," it has more than once occurred to me if the writer of these articles was not taking an exaggerated view of the responsibility of the Indian National Congress for the various misfortunes of the Hindu community which he has described with such warmth and fullness. It is true that within the last 20 years the Hindus of this Province, and also of the neighbouring Province situated to its East, have greatly suffered from a policy of denominational preferment followed by the Government of the land in the administration of the country's affairs. It is also true that the Reform Scheme, as modified to meet the demands of the Muslim League, leaves the Hindu community in a position of great disadvantage. In finding out, however, the cause of this state of things it will be *wiser* to clear our mind of certain long-established prejudices and to do the searching of heart in a real and earnest spirit of self-examination. Is the Congress solely responsible for the ills of which we complain? Does not a part of the blame attach to us—the Hindus of these Provinces? Are those who have posed and still pose as leaders of the Hindu community quite



Again :—

I wish I could fix the identity of Mr. "Observer" and then ask him straight in the face what steps he took to save Hindus from the fate that was threatening them ? Did he move his little finger either to open the eyes of Government or that of the Hindu public ? Did he ever see any official and put the Hindu case before him, or did he make any attempt to organise them into a Hindu political body ?

Further :—

In justice to the founders and leaders of the Indian National Congress be it said that it was far from their mind to found a Hindu Congress. A good many of them were neither Hindus nor Mohammadans, they prided on being non-sectarian, and their ambition was not to create a Hindu nationality but an Indian nationality. They made no secret of their political faith. It was from the house tops that they proclaimed that they were Indians first and anything afterwards.

That fact is that the Hindu leaders of this Province are either hopelessly selfish or hopelessly ignorant of what politics is.

In the second place, as the extracts show, each takes the unknown "Observer" personally to task and both seem to be wroth with him for his omissions and faults, ready to administer reproof if they could get hold of his identity. One of them has even pointedly put the question "to state honestly whether he (Observer) has ever cared a brass farthing for them" *i. e.*, Hindus. I will not answer personal queries. "Observer" aims not to discuss personalities, the faults and omissions of this or that individual. For that very reason, in spite of a suggestion in the *Punjabee* by a certain correspondent from Amritsar, he has chosen to continue to appear under a *nom de plume*. He wants to discuss principles and to propagate among the

Hindu community what he sincerely believes to be healthy ideas and the right course. But just to satisfy curiosity for a moment he is prepared to say that he has no following as is assumed by the Candid Friend." He is so far "I by itself I," and if any person believes himself to be his follower "Observer" is unconscious of the circumstance. Nor has he any "doughty lieutenants following exactly the same policy in the matter of the Exhibition that is intended to be held in this Province in next December," as remarked by the Candid Friend."

He, however, pleads guilty to the charge that he did not ever see any official and put the Hindu case before him. But with all due deference to "Candid Friend" and "Plain Truth" he adheres rigidly to the view that the 'Congress has proved a source of weakness to Hindu political interest. And in order to make this position clear it seems necessary to recapitulate a little. This is what I stated in my first letter:

To add to this natural misfortune the Hindus have got a self-inflicted one in what is called and known as the Congress. This has proved a veritable source of weakness for purely Hindu interests. If there is one thing which is strictly forbidden within the precincts of the Congress it is the term "Hindu." Resolutions may be passed to favour purely Mohammadan interests, but the Hindu is tabooed there.

### **Again :**

The Congress, the only political machinery in the country, will not take up their cause because from the very commencement it has assumed to itself a sentimental ideal and is now afraid to climb down, happen what may, even though the situation may result in disaster to Hindus. The

## In the second I stated :

In my letter under the heading. "Self-Abnegation in Politics" printed in the *Punjabee* of 23rd ultimo, I referred to the imbecility of the Hindus in protecting their own interests and the dangerous predicament they were placed in, owing to their self imposed attempt at unification. I further alluded to the fact that, while their cause lacked support both from within and without, their political rivals were busy heart and soul in pushing forward their communal nationality and making the gulf between the two communities as wide as it may be. The result was that Hindu nationality and Hindu sentiments were being gradually obliterated and thrown in the background, if not pushed out of existence.

## In the third I stated

Unfortunately the poison imbibed for the last twenty-five years under the Congress treatment has so obscured our vision that we have lost all power of seeing things in true proportions. Lord Morley, in his reply to the Mohammadan deputation, felt bound in courtesy to extend his encomiums to the Madras Congress as well, but he felt (and by his action showed that he felt) that the community which really deserved that praise was the community represented in the Amritsar Educational and Political Conferences. It seems to me under the circumstances absolutely necessary to apply the knife to remove the film from our vision, which would then of itself, without the forcep's help, become bright and clear. Some people are getting impatient and retort that the view propounded is purely destructive. It is so no doubt. But if an evil has seized a community and is eating up its vital parts, it is according to all right medical opinion needful to purge the poison before giving tonics. This is a matter of daily experience in malarial fever. Quinine as an antidote is of no avail or of very little avail without a thorough cleaning and purging of the bowels. It appears to me that the Hindu community at this moment is in the grip of

which the Hindu community has adopted to achieve the formation of an Indian nation, is suicidal. I may be wrong in diagnosis when set against a Gokhale or a Surendra Nath, but it is my sincere belief—and I mean to press it on the attention of the Hindu community—that they are proceeding on wrong lines, and that self-effacement, whatever may be the reward for it, is not a desirable means of end.

It is clear from these extracts that the position I have taken up is that *our misfortunes are due to Congress, that it has served as a film to obscure our vision from the right path, and that it is a poison which requires to be purged from the system to permit of its healthy growth.* This position is contested by "Candid Friend" and "Plain Truth" who appear to be evidently staunch Congressmen, at any rate the latter, and who throw the blame for the misfortune, which is admitted by both, on the selfish Hindus of the Province. This I deny, and in order to see which view is right, let us take a dip into the history of the political agitation in the Province. Let me say at once, with due deference to some other critics, that I do not regard the controversy as having merely an academic interest.

At least I can say for myself it would be very difficult for me to induce myself to undertake the task if an academic discussion was the main object. I am not accustomed to writing in the Press and for the Press and the genesis of the present letters in the controversy over the Reform Scheme. My first letter was written and published soon after the announcement by Lord Morely that the demands of the Mohammadans for excessive privileges and special treatment would be met in full. This I regarded as decisive of the fate of the two communities, and I thought—not only thought but keenly felt—that time had come when we ought to take a stock

the most critical juncture and true so far to its self-imposed ideal, it refused to interfere in a quarrel between the Hindus and the Mohammadans though in truth the principles it had hitherto pressed and urged were directly thrown overboard by the highest authority. The idea of Self-Government on the colonial pattern was declared by Lord Morely to be a dream. The Indian Congress Committee had gone into sleep. Mehta was silent for he is not a Hindu, and Gokhale, who is a Hindu at least by birth and name, instead of rising equal to the occasion, wanted to cover his retreat minimising the importance of the struggle and almost allowed himself to be tricked and outstripped by Ali Imam. Surely it is not a matter of mere academic interest to take account of our position and to see if we are actually investing in profitable concerns. This is all I am at. If we are not, then it is only our duty to discard the undertaking, whatever hallow of sanctity may have enveloped it by time and however high the names who engineer it. It seems painful to undo the work of 23 years. But 23 years is mere ripple in the life of a community, specially of an ancient community like ours, and there can be and ought to be not the slightest hesitation to obliterate and strike out of existence such work if in the least it tends to efface self consciousness and to give a bend, however small, in the wrong direction.

"Candid Friend" and "Plain Truth" would seem to obscure the position once more by shifting the blame from the Congress to the Hindus of this Province who are depicted as extremely selfish. I do not for a moment admit that the Hindus of this Province as a body are selfish as is represented. But even if this were granted it would not account for the repulse all along the line. Is it alleged that the Hindus of Bengal, Bombay and Madras

my friends candidly and truly ascribe the partition of Bengal to the selfish nature of the Bengalees? It is said that Government and Mohammadans have joined hands and entered into an implied compact against the Hindus. Granted. But why has Government done this? Why stop short at an intermediate fact and why not go deep to the root of the evil? Why not acknowledge that Government has joined hands with the Mahammadans because the Congress began to make impossible demands. As Lord Dufferin said, it wanted "to sit in the seat of Phæton and guide the chariot of the Sun," and as Lord Morely says it wanted "to have the moon." The explanation given, *viz.*, that the Panjabi Hindu has been for ages "an extremely selfish creature," is therefore unsatisfactory on the face of it and is partial and one-sided. It throws the enquirer off the line. But as I have stated, it is not true even as regards our own Province, and for that purpose I will ask the reader to stand on the bridge and take a retrospective view and see how political waters have hitherto flown in the Province of the Five Rivers. The task will better be begun in the next letter than at the fag-end of the present, and I therefore stop here and reserve it for the next.

In my last letter I promised to take the reader backward to see whether it is the Congress propaganda, as alleged by me, or the selfish nature of the Hindus of this Province, asserted by my critics, which has led to their present disgrace and discomfiture. The history of political agitation in this Province is practically coæval with the rise and spread of education. The first graduate from the Lahore College passed about 1870. The attendance in the Colleges was meagre until the Delhi College was abolished about 1876 and whatever spare energy there existed then was absorbed in religious enthusiasm by the *Sat Sabha* on the one hand and the Brahmo Samaj on the other. Meanwhile, slowly steadily the Bar of the Province was gaining in strength and numbers, and included within its fold persons possessed of fearless courage and and intrepidity quite the reverse of what "Candid Friend" and "Plain Truth" depict to be extremely selfish nature. The Bar received accretions during the period from outside the Province and was joined by members who, it may be said without fear of contradiction, mainly moulded the political creed of the Province for thirty years, between 1870 and 1900. Another and an important factor arose about the same time, *i. e.*, about 1876-77, *viz.*, the establishment of the Arya Samaj in the capital of the Province. This is a purely religious movement through and through but it differed very materially and substantially from both the *Sat Sabha* and the Brahmo Samaj. It did not confine itself to singing devotional hymns like the former, nor like the latter it levelled down the sanctity of the Vedas which form, as it were, the foundation-stone of the Hindu Society in all aspects. On

social as well as national, and by beat of drum proclaimed the Vedas as its sole creed, faith and refuge. Its direct aim was to propagate religious reform, but its very presence tended to conserve the spirit of Communism among the Hindus, and that it did in face of the charge not unoften brought against it of narrow-minded sectarianism. Thus about the end of the seventies, and in the early eighties forces existed in the Province which could not but lead to and engender some sort of political activity. Education had spread and was spreading widely and rapidly. The Bar had outlived its infancy and was attaining youthful vigour by recruitment of indigenous talent and accretions from outside and spirit of self-consciousness had already awakened in the Province. Politics could not under the circumstances have remained dormant much longer, and we therefore find the same period giving birth to the Indian Association, a political organisation founded on a visit by Babu Surréndranath after the prototype having the same name at Calcutta. The Association at Lahore was originally intended to be affiliated to the Calcutta Association, but that I believe was never accomplished and the Lahore Indian Association continued to carry on its own work and all along maintained an independent existence. There existed at the same time another Association more conservative in its nature and much older in duration and wielding a greater and much wider influence. This was the Siksha Sabha.

The latter comprised as its members the Reis class mainly, but interspersed with members from amongst the educated such as had been fortunate to secure rank and position in life. The political activity in the sense of relations with Government was therefore shared in the early eighties between these two Associations. The one was conservative in its *personell* and represented the Reis class ~~with all its inherent connotations. The other~~



body with all the tendencies that are associated with liberalism. Though some of the members were common to both the two societies were practically exclusive in aims and each tried to swamp the other. There were not indications wanting in the Siksha Sabha to include more of the educated class within its fold, and the Indian Association naturally desired to associate in its work, so far as might be, the influence wielded by the Reis class. Harmony, however, could not be maintained for a long time between two such opposing forces, and when the time of trial came there occurred at once a split. The dispute arose on the University question. It is old history now, and I will not recite it. The members of the Indian Association who were members of the Sabha resigned their positions there and began the struggle with the earnestness and enthusiasm which would do credit to people in any community. And yet "Candid Friend" would dogmatise that the Hindus of this Province were and are extremely selfish from ages. And be it remembered that the struggle was mainly conducted and carried to its final issue by the educated Hindu. There were laid before him all manner of temptations, but these he discarded and heroically struggled against serious odds, struck to the right position and carried victory, but for which all true progress in the Province might have been thrown back for centuries.

Henceforward the Siksha Sabha crumbled away like a pack of cards as it was bound to do when all enlightened support was withdrawn from it, and it is now passing its days of dotage in the Punjab Association. The same principle has taken new birth in the Chiefs' Association, but how far this fresh attempt to revive pure conservatism in politics will survive remains yet to be seen. The child is yet only one year old, and though fondled in golden from the high pontiff, it is

doubtful, to say the least, whether it possesses intrinsic vitality without which no growth can survive, though amply nourished by extrinsic elements. The result of the struggle on the University question was to leave the Indian Association alone in the field. It pursued a liberal policy in the conduct of its affairs, criticised Government acts, presented addresses to the local Governors on their assumption of offices, and perhaps even on leaving them as in the case of Sir Charles Aitchison, and otherwise took active part in the political questions of the day. It took the leading part, I think, in the Ilbert Bill dispute and founded the National Fund for use in case of need. The Association was composed both of the Hindu and the Mohammadan members and included Government servants even on its roll. One of its Vice-Presidents for a long time was Khan Bahadur Barkat Ali Khan, and it is peculiarly significant to note that when the National Fund was started in reply to the Anglo-Indian Defence Fund at Calcutta, the head of the leading Kazalbash family of Lahore, whose Chief now is the President of the Punjab Muslim League, contributed rupees two thousand towards the Fund.

Such was the state of affairs till 1885 when the Congress propaganda was started and held its session for the first time in Bombay. Some other attempts at political organisations had been ere while made by the English founder of the Congress on his visits to the Province, but these had failed to bear fruit and the Indian Association stood firm to the liberal policy which it had adopted and hitherto enforced. The foundation and establishment of the Congress, however at once brought about a change. The Indian Association, mainly under the influence of its leading men from Bengal, identified itself at once with the Congress propaganda, and the result was the immediate

Hindu non-official Association with the Congress propaganda as its chief plank. It identified itself with the Congress policy and acted and worked to carry the same out. Its principal members and office-holders were Congressmen, and those who ventured even mildly to criticise the Congress were cried down as sectarians. It is the reverse of truth, to put it mildly, that the Congress excited no enthusiasm in this Province and that "the members joined half-heartedly and ate and ruminated and ruminated and ate." The enthusiastic reception which the people gave to Dadabhai Naoroji on the occasion of the first Congress Session at Lahore is a standing disproof of all such assertions. There can be no manner of doubt that Congress formed the order of the day even in this "selfish Province." There was no other talk but of Congress and no other subject which so much absorbed the activity of the educated. It was a sort of mania. People did not stop to think what it meant, but took the whole thing for granted on the credit of leaders from Bengal, Bombay and Madras. Any contradiction at the time meant belittling oneself. It was a gigantic wave which swept over the face of the country, and people willingly allowed themselves to be submerged under it.

There were a few people in the Province even then who were not enchanted by the glamour of the idea, but these formed a microscopic minority and it was quite sufficient to demolish them to remark that they were narrow-minded sectarians. In the Congress which was held at Lahore in 1893 eight hundred and sixty seven delegates attended. In the three Congresses which were held at Calcutta in 1890 (I am leaving out of account the Congress of 1886 as held at an early stage) 1896 and 1901, the numbers of the delegates were 677, 784 and 896. Surely this is not an unfavourable comparison as regards

of the educated in Bengal and the Punjab. It is clear therefore that from 1885 onward the Congress formed the rampant idea in the Province and naturally trained the political energy in its own direction. And this result fully displayed itself in the public Press. If there was one policy which the Press had deliberately adopted and by which it adjudged the public questions invariably, it was the Congress policy. Everything else was subordinated to it. And as I put it in my first letter, the Press was so Congress-ridden that it was even afraid to put forward a Hindu grievance as a Hindu grievance. The cult formed in a manner a free masonry which dominated the utterances of public men whether it was on the platform or in the Press.

In the Punjab the leading-strings were held at one time by the Bengali gentlemen who had joined the Bar. They were wedded to the Congress cause and would tolerate no opponents. On their retirement Bakhshi Jaishi Ram took up the leading position, but his enthusiasm for the Congress was no less. On his sad and untimely death there occurred a sort of interregnum. The enthusiasm had cooled down a little, there was a breathing time, and people naturally began to think and consider. It was this interval that gave occasion to the growth of the idea that Congress without a set work and a constitution did not make an adequate return for the money, labour and energy that was spent upon it. The Province in a manner fell away from the Congress, but not for long. Enthusiasm was rekindled soon after with a vengeance. It looked as if pent-up force had burst open the wall and hurled down with vehemence. Rest is a matter of recent history and I will not say any thing more. But I demur to the allegation made by "Plain Truth" that as a result of the pressure put upon him by his Samaiic brethren, a prominent member of the Arva

organizing political life of this province. I am afraid for the time being he put too much heart into the matter. However, as I have said, I will not discuss it. But the fact is patent that whatever political life has existed in the Province since 1885 it took its breath from the Congress and the Congress alone. Would my critics say the later developments of political activity in the Province were not mere re-echoes of the forces which have rent the Congress into two parts? Inside the Province there was a further weakening cause by the differences represented by the refugees of the effete Reception Committee and the members of the old Indian Association. Each purported to represent a certain phase of political activity. But in spite of their differences both represented mainly the Congress policy in its different aspect, and not a policy different from the Congress. Both were mainly conducted by the Hindus but in neither Hinduism formed the predominant idea. Possibly, though it might look strange, the Reception Committee stuck to the Indian ideal even more zealously than the Indian Association. Where was the "selfish Hindu" all this time? Did he cause the secession of the Muslim element from the Indian Association, and was he the cause of the exclusion of Government servants from taking part in politics? Can it be denied that the impossible position which the Congress adopted from the very start was the sole cause? Here are some specimen Resolutions of the first session of the Congress. By Resolution No. 2 the Congress advocated the abolition of the Council of the Secretary of State. By Resolution No. 3 it urged the reform and expansion of the Councils and asked for a Standing Committee of the House of Commons to listen to formal protests recorded by majority of the Councils. Resolution No. 5 protested

extend the Imperial guarantee to the Indian debt, while Resolution No. 7 deprecated the annexation of Upper Burma. No wonder that the Government felt alarmed at these resolutions.

This is then how the Congress inaugurated its work, by demanding an abolition of the Council of the Secretary of State, by demanding a Standing Committee of the House of Commons to receive and consider formal protests against the decisions of the highest Executive in India, by requesting Great Britain to extend an Imperial guarantee to the Indian debt, and by deprecating the annexation of Upper Burma. Resolutions relating to volunteering and the practical repeal of the Arms Act were added soon after in 1886-87 and have since been pressed throughout. The scheme so set forth is doubtless complete. The Council of the Secretary of State abolished, non official majority in the Legislative Councils with power to appeal to the House of Commons against veto by the executive, volunteering established, Arms Act repealed, military expenditure decreased, with British guarantee for Indian debt to boot. The only flaw in the scheme was that it entirely ignored and overlooked the relative position of those who demanded and those to whom the demands were made. I don't for a moment say that there were not sane resolutions passed by the Congress. There were several such though subsidiary. But the crucial point of the fabric, the pivot round which the farne-work revolved, was as in the scheme set forth above. I do not again say it is bad. If such peaceful revolution could be secured no one would grudge it. But the fault of the scheme was that it took the other party to be mere fools. It was a case of mad arrogance, to put it only mildly, leading its votaries to an insensate attitude, and the result was doubly disastrous. The nranaganda created cravings in the

to self-interest, I might say *selfish interest*, could not permit to be attained, with all the consequences which would follow from such struggle. And what is still more important, it engendered a grim suspicion in the minds of the Governors with its natural sequence, a hostile attitude towards the aims and objects of the Congress. The struggle began at once. The Congress commenced to seek support by popularising its prapaganda. The bureaucracy began to wreck it by creating a secession of the Mohammadan and by placing a halter round the neck of its own servants. Other influences were also probably set.

In my last letter I took a retrospective view of political agitation in our Province and referred to the Congress as a dominant factor ever since its birth in 1885. I alluded to the principal scheme set forth by the Congress at its very inauguration and tried to show it was thwarted by the Government, who at a very early stage, if not since the very commencement, assumed an attitude of suspicion towards its aims and objects. I further stated that the struggle had ended in crippling the Congress, and, as its necessary consequence, had involved a repulse to the Hindu community, apart from the cardinal circumstance that its very establishment had misled the community to neglect its own interests. I, however, pointed out that the Congress had succeeded in attaining one object, *viz.* the expansion of the Legislative Councils, and this is a matter which I promised to deal with in greater detail in the present letter. There can be no doubt that the expansion of the Legislative Councils on the elective principle was one of the principal points that the Congress had set its heart on attaining. And it must be conceded that the Congress in this respect has achieved a partial success. The Government is perhaps unwilling to acknowledge the success fully. It professes to believe that the expansion is a natural sequence of progress made by the country and not due to any pressure or agitation. But even granting that the Reform in Councils has taken effect as a natural growth, there can be no doubt that the growth has been forced and stimulated by the pressure exercised by the Congress. Here, therefore, there is at any rate on the surface an achievement which the Congress may very well point out as a triumph of its past labours. A reformed



elective principle as an element in representation, and the same principle has received further recognition in the new India Councils Act. The question is whether this is a triumph in substance and reality, and not a mere illusion. If public feeling is at all a safe guide and a sound test, the enthusiasm which the announcement of the scheme had evoked in the beginning, and which then led the Congress to sound peals of triumph, has already subsided to the lowest ebb. This may be said to be but a natural process. Enthusiasm cannot be maintained even for the best occasion of joy for a long time. Subsidence is a natural sequence here as elsewhere, and in course of time the normal state must resume its hold. But here it is not a mere case of cessation of joy, but, I venture to remark, a case of revulsion of feeling. What was looked upon and hailed at one time as a matter for holiday-making has now caused sore dismay and disappointment to the Hindu community. The Hindus have lost their importance as a community and a principle of undue preference on religious grounds has been fully, completely and openly recognised. Surely, gaining a few elected seats in the Legislative Councils as an advantage will kick the beam when set in the balance against the sacrifice of principle and relegation of the Hindus to a secondary position in a country where they exceed in numbers, wealth, education and influence and where they settled of yore. The truth is that here again the Government, speaking more properly the Anglo-Indian Government, set to work to defeat the Congress with the same weapons that were used when the Congress was started and its aims were suspected. It looks like a game on the chess board. The Congress advanced its soldiers in large numbers with support from other ranks, and for a time, just a short time, the bureaucrat seemed to be nonplussed. But he did not take much breath to

the Congress King found himself again in a tight corner with no hope of escape, dejected and crest-fallen and suing for mercy.

To understand the real position, let us for a moment cast a glance at the provisions of the new Act and see what it actually yields. It is merely a skeleton Act, leaving everything of importance and substance to be filled in by Rules and Regulations to be framed by the Governor-General in Council, with the approval of the Secretary of State. By section (1) it is provided that the additional members of the Councils for the purpose of making Laws and Regulations shall include members both nominated and elected, and their maximum number is fixed by the Schedule attached for each Council. By section (2) the number of ordinary members of the Executive Councils at Madras and Bombay is fixed to be four, out of which two at least shall be Government servants of twelve years' standing. Section (3) takes the power to constitute Executive Councils for other Provinces; Section (4) contains a minor provision for appointment of a Vice-President; Section (5) authorises discussion of annual financial statements subject to rules to be framed; Section (6) gives power to make Regulations for the purposes of the Act: and Section (7) is merely a formal section relating to the construction, date of commencement and repeal. It is clear from this short analysis that the only substantial concession made by the Act is the recognition of elective principle in the appointment of additional members to the Legislative Councils in addition to nomination. The provision relating to Executive Councils merely increases the numbers and so far contains no legislative guarantee for the introduction of members other than European. Discussion of annual financial statement and interpellations are to be hedged in by Rules and Regulations which have not yet been framed, and therefore it is difficult to fore-

see at present how far the concession would go. Even the concession relating to elective system is subject to Rules and Regulations which have not yet been framed and which doubtless would be subject to modifications and alterations as it will suit the need of the occasion. The only material provision, therefore, left under the act is the addition of numbers in the Legislative Councils. The proportions are not fixed yet. But it is clear that the elected members will be in a minority both in the Provincial and the Imperial Councils. A majority of non-officials is provided for in the Provincial Councils, but as explained by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons this does not mean a majority of the elected, but a majority of the elected and nominated together. For the Imperial Councils the official majority is positively assured and secured. The net gain therefore is the return of a few members by election to each Legislative Council. But the privilege granted so far is not even safe and sound. It is subject to decrease and diminution by elections to be exercised by Chambers of Commerce and other interests and to sub-division between the two main communities, Hindu and Mohamman, as independent, separate and rival entities. Add to this the influence which the official is always in a position to exercise, specially in the case of election by Municipalities and Boards and it will be perceived that after all 'the will of the people' in the Legislative Chambers would be a microscopic atom to be perceived only by strong magnifying glasses. Is this the concession of which the Congress can feel so proud and place as an asset against the heavy liabilities otherwise incurred? To the Hindu it has proved a veritable source of disease and danger, and when the time came for raising the head a little, a push is given which rolls the community back on the ground.

to the selfish Hindu, and according to their latest utterances mainly due to the selfish Hindu. I have given the history of political agitation in the Province and tried to show that the real cause was the Congress, which for the time completely dominated Hindu politics and by reason of its impossible demands and defiant attitude alienated the Government sympathy from the Hindu cause and actually converted it into sullen hostility. Sir Syed Ahmed did attempt to snatch the Agra College, a purely Hindu foundation, and other factors may have arisen to create a tension between the two communities. But these were matters of indifference to the Government so far as its own attitude was concerned. The actual split, however, between the two communities did occur on the Congress and it was induced, as is generally believed, by the Government because the latter suspected the object and aim of the Congress. This is a matter which cannot be denied. The Congress, therefore, is the sole cause of the present Government attitude towards the Hindus and has so far brought about a sad condition of affairs. Where was the selfish Hindu all this time? Was he present in the ranks of the Congress or outside its rank? Assuredly not inside the Congress. If he did exist there he had no voice, and it would be a slander on the Congress work to say that it allowed itself to be swayed during its career by the selfish Hindu. In fact, he was ostracised from the beginning. He may have been present there to communicate the news. But this is a matter which can never be avoided, and Congress, I believe had no secrets to conserve. It is enough to remark that the selfish Hindu did not lead and direct the Congress policy and therefore can't be held to have influenced its career. Whatever credit or discredit, therefore, attaches to the Congress work it is of its own making and it would be, to say the least, unjust and unfair to throw the burden of its own folly and failure on the shoulders of the selfish

Hindu. If the Congress claims credit for its work, it ought to be ready and willing to have blame for the evil consequences of its policy. I do not for a moment deny that the selfish Hindu has existed in this Province. The society which is free from such scrofulous taint will have to be searched in Mars or in the Moon and not on this earthly planet of ours. Even societies which are most reputed for patriotic impulses are not free from such selfish creatures. The amount of political espionage and treachery which is prevalent in European countries is but a small index of the inroads of selfish characters. To expect, therefore, that selfish Hindus do not and will not exist in the Province of Five Rivers is to expect an impossibility or a happy reversion from Kali Yuga to Satya Yuga.

But it appears to me that the matter is too much exaggerated evidently from a desire to cast the blame of unpleasant consequences on a third party. Let us examine this more calmly. The Hindu society at present is divided into five main classes. There are those who are employed in Government service; those who exercise independent professions of law and medicine; those who have taken to trade and commerce; fourthly the members of the industrial class; and last, but not the least, the aristocratic or Reis class. The fourth class may at once be left out of account for tracing the selfish Hindu. There is no occasion for him to be there as the class is yet immersed in ignorance and practically is outside the pale of politics. As regards the first, there may be here and there isolated individuals who to forward their rise may fulfil the description. But their number is small, and I believe the vast majority are concerned and concern themselves merely with performing their daily duty and earning their monthly pay. The number of selfish Hindus must proportionately be even less in the second class and the third class, and if they are to be



Hindu to pour out his poison, I will admit. But I will not admit that the result is due to the selfish Hindu and not the hurtful policy adopted. To say so will put the true matter upside down. It would be, as the saying goes, putting the cart before the horse. This is a truth which is altogether overlooked or minimised in the argument. The healthier and sounder the political agitation the less is the occasion for the selfish Hindu to cause injury. In the second place the difficult position which a leader occupies in relation to Government is entirely overlooked. It is expected as if the leader is to be discourteous, unaccommodating, and wholly selfish in the interests of the democracy behind. This may be possible in free countries. But to my mind it is an impossibility under an alien Government. The object in view is to secure greater privileges for and safeguard the interests of the democracy behind, and in order to achieve it, it is absolutely essential to move with a conciliatory attitude. The leader, in order to exercise any influence on the mind of the Government, must be willing and ready to accommodate the Government in some matters, otherwise it will be necessarily a one-sided bargain, and it is simple folly to expect that he will be listened to. He must use tact and yield not in matters of principle, but might in ceremonial matters at least. But what would be his position if he be adversely criticised by the constituency behind on formal concessions, while the Government would look upon him as a rude animal to be avoided if he were fully to carry out such wishes of his constituents. Blame the leader by all means if he sacrifices a principle, or by his conduct, word or action allows the important and vital concerns of his community to be injured. Not only blame but break him into pieces if you like, but at the same time we ought to check the insatiate desire of criticising every act, however innocent, simply because it appears to

accommodate the Government or has an official odour. If we do so we make his position as a leader impossible, and we take away from him the little power and opportunity which he may possess of securing some advantage for his community. Selfish Hindu exists and will exist and if he happens to be a leader he will naturally absorb certain advantages for his exclusive benefit, as any leader will more or less, in spite of himself, by his very position as a leader. We may have this and his social amenities with the Government for so far there is no harm and nothing unnatural. If, however this limit be exceeded and the desire be to aggrandise himself at the expense of the community, then doubtless we ought not to hesitate to denounce and wreck his position as a leader. But in any case it is essential that we should ourselves proceed on legitimate lines and not try to shift the responsibility of our own misguided policy on the selfish Hindu leader and thereby confuse the real issue.

The Hindus and Mohammadans may fight with each other. This is really deplorable and should be avoided as far as it may be possible, with due regard to considerations of honour and self-respect. So far, however, it is mere trial of strength between the contending parties. But the matter assumes a graver aspect if a third party and that the Government of the country joins the Mohammadans. That surely ought to be a good reason for making a halt and to reconsider the position. True statesmanship would then require making an attempt to reconcile the new force or at least to neutralise it. This is neither cowardice nor base selfishness. To go on as before would be wanton recklessness. For even the strongest nations seek alliances and enter into them—or, at any rate, strive to neutralise hostile combinations.



### XIII.

Evidently the object aimed at by the discussion started by these letters is still misunderstood in certain quarters or not properly kept in view. The object is not to discuss the general amelioration of the Hindu community in its various aspects : that is a wide subject fully deserving of treatment, but inadmissible of discussion excepting by sections and chapters. The chapter here opened is the political aspect of the Hindu community *under its present environments*: That is the sole end in view and I mean to adhere to it in spite of irrelevant distractions. As I have expressed casually in the course of these letters, I am an ardent supporter of industrial and commercial progress of my community, and I have advocated its educational advancement with the special preponderance of its ancient language and vernaculars. But these are matters relevant to the present discussion only so far as they might be affected by the attitude of the Government towards the Hindu community. I have never, again, said a word against the principle of self-help. In fact my "wail" for the Hindu community is to stand on its own legs without help or support of crutches from the other community. To say, then, that I have no vision beyond securing a few posts or better status with the Government is misleading. But I candidly admit that my vision is not fanciful or imaginary. If some people have wider vision they are welcome to entertain it, and if they insist that others should dream the same, they ought to come forward with more direct suggestions than indulging in vague references to the inner strength of a community. What I feel most concerned with on the present occasion is the present political condition of the Hindu community. It appears here, again there is some confusion of ideas as regards the scope and range

of politics. I freely admit that I understand politics in the sense of relations between the governed and the governors. It was in this sense that I endorsed the view that politics is essential for every well-ordered and civilised community. But there is another sense attached to politics which I do not endorse, *viz.*, the uprooting of these relations, whether it be in the case of an alien or indigenous government. This is termed somewhat differently. At any rate that is not the sense in which I use or employ the term.

Taking, then, that there is the Government, alien in the present case, the point which appeals most to my mind is how we should maintain our relations and make the best use of our present position. If there are people who wish to carry the discussion beyond these limits they are welcome to do so, but not with reference to what is argued in these letters. This is the substratum on which I proceed, and if this is weak, false or untrue, then no doubt the upper structure would be affected accordingly. I may affirm at once that I do not believe in perpetuation of any human work. This I regard as an impossibility. There is more or less duration for every human system dependent more or less upon its vitality. But I take the present system as still strong and vigorous, and I am more confirmed in this view by very recent history. However, whether right or wrong, this is the basal position on which I invite discussion, and there is no use of raising dust-storms to conceal the real point or trying to discredit the discussion and minimise its importance as if it were a mere question of a few posts in Government service. Here, again the view taken seems to me to be partial and prejudiced, but I think I have given sufficient material for deliberation in a previous letter and believe there is no need

that has appeared since then. But it appears to me that the question of due share in legislative machinery is of wider importance, and the attempt to minimise its significance is dangerous. It is mere tall talk to speak of self-growth and self-development. This is feasible more or less in free and self-ordained communities. But in case of subordinate communities it is suicidal to ignore and overlook the other factor which must put its impress on the development. The position taken by my critics is as if the Hindu community existed by itself and could mould its own destiny. That seems to me to be impracticable, circumstanced as we are. It is, therefore, absolutely essential in making our calculations to take into account the other forces that exist side by side. The attempt ought to be to make them favourable to our cause and not to array them against ourselves. A community may be powerful to bear down all opposition, but that surely is not practicable for a "weak and disunited" community like ours. It becomes, therefore, of paramount importance to reconcile, and not to make needlessly antagonistic, the powers that be. This is the ground on which I have attacked our present procedure, which has resulted in arranging hostile forces against us and making us even forget and undo what we are. This is surely not a mere question of securing a few posts or getting more members in the Legislative Councils. The position I survey is the general one, with particular facts as evidenced by our gradual exclusion from State patronage. Is this a small matter or a petty matter to be scouted when the result of scouting has still left its scars?

*Again, it is overlooked how communities can be borne down and crippled. History bears ample testimony to how communities have been effaced and castrated. I will not go far but only refer to the case of Kashmir Valley, where, if my information is correct, the very dress was forced upon the people to make them effeminate. There are both civilized*

and uncivilized methods of making and unmaking. It might be done by direct oppression or oppression through laws. An act of few sections levying taxation is quite enough to kill the staple industry of a country and reduce it to helplessness and penury. It is, therefore, not a small matter to be able to take share in the Legislation. Just as in service so here good men can do good in spite of certain friction and innate inertia. The attempt, therefore, ought to be to join and not to avoid; to send our best men and not keep them back. This was doubtless attempted by the Congress, but it overshot the mark and proceeded by dubious methods according to my humble estimation. *What I want is that some of the work attempted by the Congress be attempted by the Hindu community for itself within reasonable bound- and untrammelled by any consideration whatever for the interests of the other community. I regard this as a gain in itself.* My critics say that it is a mere question of securing a few posts. I leave the matter there. But I would again emphasise that if my critics wish to proceed on other lines, I pronounce neither for nor against their methods, for no indications have been given of what they are. *If training the Hindu community to look to itself will ultimately land the community in opposition to Government, then at any rate from their point of view it will not be a fruitless attempt. If, on the other hand, it will yield beneficial harvest, then surely it is not a matter to be deplored. The point I wish to urge is that patriotism ought to be communal and not merely geographical.* If I refer to Dictionary, I will be criticised for seeking help in simple matters as D.D. said when I opened Webster for finding the meaning of 'importance.' *But one thing is clear, although patriotism has come to be understood as meaning love for one's country, the origin of the word implies as much communal love as geographical. In fact, it appears to me the original idea was that of common descent as*

basis for the ideal, and as communities settled in different tracts, the tract absorbed their love and gave rise to the secondary sense. But at any rate the word is not necessarily confined to mean love for the country apart from the interests of the community to which the individual belongs. The ideal, the predominant factor, ought to be communal rather than geographical interest. Cases of this wide significance are not wanting and occur frequently. What are foreign wars and acquisitions of foreign countries whether for Government or mere trade purposes? The object in view in such cases is to evidently benefit the community. The English Doctor who treated Emperor Feroze Shah and in return for his services asked for trade privileges for his people and thereby laid the foundation of the British rule in India, was surely a patriot in the very best of its senses. The uppermost idea which I imagine influenced his mind was to benefit his own people and when we say he benefitted his country, we use the term in metaphorical sense. This is the idea which I wish to implant for the idea sown in its place by the Congress.

Instances are given where people who are not homogeneous form compact States. I do not for a moment say it is impossible. But in all these cases it is only one community that preponderates, the other forming a minority, important minority, influential minority, but still and always a minority. Take the instance of Turkey which is very often cited in these days as a case of conglomeration of different communities. But what are the facts? In the Parliament formed under the regime of the young Turks out of 180 delegates nine belonged to other nationalities and the remaining 171 were all Turks. In the Cabinet which was formed all but one were Turkish members. Surely no one can contend that with all the power in hand, and a majority to back the Turks would mal

over the reins of Government to other nationalities to show their love for the country. The idea is simply preposterous, and can be entertained only by imbecile brains. *Therefore, what is necessary and required is to bear the communal interest always in mind and this will solve the many difficulties which now present themselves.* A Hindu going to Patal would walk with his feet towards India but his head must gravitate towards the interests of his own community. Communal love, in fact, is the root of the majority of the sentiments which we love and cherish, not excluding even religion. I do not for a moment criticise the conduct of those who thoughtfully ponder over the pros and cons of this religion and that religion and then form their conclusions. But for the majority, in fact the vast majority, the religion is the religion of their forefathers. This they love and die for, because it contains the tenets and practices of their ancestors, be they Rishis or Paigamburs. The idea is to love everything owned by the community. It may be religion, it may be a tract of country, or it may be a phase of civilisation. But these are mere outward clothes of the inner feeling. This then is the fire I wish to rekindle. Here in politics, in the sense I have explained, the desire is to secure better political advantages and to safeguard the universal interests of the community as a whole, for if individuals lose, the community loses likewise. I will not repeat my arguments on this point, but I still adhere solidly to the opinion that it is not a loss which ought to be borne if it can be avoided. Opinions may differ on this point. Some think we ought to leave the Government alone. If any have such conscientious objections I do not wish to interfere with them. But I press that under the present circumstances such scruples ought to be rare; that on the whole the

ought to take their proper part and that the community as a whole ought to support such claims leaving the vision beyond, for future. In Bengal itself, where the boycott was started under most favourable circumstances, it proved a total failure for avoiding participation in administration. Very few could be found who would give up and abandon even honorary posts under the Government. It is purely futile to make such attempts and under the present circumstances detrimental and ruinous to the Hindu cause.

The difficulty is that we sway from one extremity to the other. The case of Parsis is referred to as an instance in point of a strong and compact community by itself, independent of Government. But the analogy is entirely fallacious and the facts assumed wholly wrong. In the first place the Parsees form a puny community. It is, moreover, an alien community that settled in the country under pressure of exclusion from their homes or for purposes of trade. Where, however the numbers are so small it is quite feasible and practicable for the whole community, if it chooses, to employ whole of their energy in one direction and the one direction only. Thus it is quite possible for the whole community to merely engage in trade and do nothing else. There are no Parsees engaged in agriculture. But it would be as good argument to say that because Parsees can live as a strong and compact community without taking up agriculture, therefore agriculture is to be avoided by the Hindu community. It is an entire misconception of the "vision beyond" to compare a small community consisting of a few lakhs with a community composed of twenty crores. The needs and requirements in one case cannot possibly be identical with those of the other. Moreover, it is not a correct fact that Parsees

news to many, who have but the slightest acquaintance with facts. If a Parsee Judge of the Bombay High Court, a Parsee member of the Imperial Legislative Council, a Parsee knight dominating the Municipal Corporation of Bombay means voluntary exclusion from Government patronage, I have no objection to the Hindu community exercising the same kind of *sannyas*. But my friend is obviously oblivious of the fact that in other spheres of life the Parsees have more than a proportionate share. Large numbers are employed in the Railway service and the door of public service is open to them, in fact more open to them, because the community as a whole never identified themselves with the Congress propaganda. In fact the Congress leader who set his face against some of the extravagances of the Congress and who has, to say the least, taken most prominent part in working the Congress for securing due share in the administration is the Parsee leader. If "Candid Friend" still adheres to this instance of Parsees as a case of voluntary exclusion from Government patronage I am afraid it will be impossible for me to convince him. His last letter contains several inconsistent assertions and incorrect facts. It is not true that Hindus in other provinces have not suffered by identifying themselves with the Congress cause. It will be tiresome to go into these details and the facts appear to me to be beyond all manner of doubt. The Congress, however, in one place is called by him "harmless pastime" but a few lines above occurs the following passage: "*I am willing to admit that if the Hindus had not joined the Congress and had instead worked strenuously for their own exclusive amelioration they would have now been infinitely stronger than they are.*" This candid admission by my friend puts



I think I have by this time sufficiently defined and made clear my own position. The progress towards the final goal was hampered to a great extent by the need for answering adverse criticism but still I have tried to keep my own aim steadfastly in view. Ignoring this of running fusillade from behind the hills, I think I ought now to try to grapple with the question with which I ended my first letter. I said then "The Congress, the only political machinery in the country, will not take up their cause because from the very commencement it has assumed to itself a sentimental ideal and is now afraid to climb down, happen what may; even though the situation may result in disaster to Hindus. The Hindu Press is wedded to the Congress cry and is equally hesitant to advocate purely Hindu interests. What is to be done? Are the Hindus simply to remain as spectators of their own ruin?" In the discussion which has followed this letter, I have attempted to emphasise the loss and to trace its source and to combat the counter theory advanced which would attribute the misfortune to the selfish Hindu. The result, however, is admitted on all hands and the diagnosis is relevant so far as to facilitate the remedy. I have in the interval given indications of the lines on which I wish to proceed. This was inevitable, as the dominant thought which swayed my mind must break out occasionally as the opportunity was offered. But to complete my argument it is essential that I should put the positive side of the question in some systematic and easily intelligible form. The simple point is what ought to be the political attitude of the Hindus under the altered conditions?

less detail. In the first place, it is argued that we ought to leave politics severely alone and concentrate our energies on self-amelioration. This theory finds favour with some under pressure of necessity by their connection with religious and social movements or Government service ; with others it is the pure result of indifference and inertia, while some, and these I believe act in good faith, trust in it as a *summum bonum* of their political creed. It is nicknamed as *sat bachni* by its opponents, while the advocate of the theory designate it as containing the essence of truth in the well-known proverb "*Raja kare so niyae.*" So far as the first class is concerned I have nothing to gainsay their belief or conduct. For as I have said on a previous occasion I am a believer in the division of labour. While I do not wish that all potent vitality should be absorbed in religious and social and economical movements ; I do not at the same time advocate that every thinking mind should turn its attention to politics. The boundary line cannot be well defined. An economist may here and there dabble in politics and a politician may take share in economical progress. But on the whole the best results probably are attainable by concentrating sole or main attention to one object only. An absence of any such marked proclivity is doubtless a source of weakness at the present juncture, and there can be no question that the best results have been attained in departments where sole attention is fixed on one object, be it educational, religious or economical. I have, therefore, nothing to urge against those who shun politics under such necessity. But the matter stands on a different footing where some people urge the theory as a matter of political faith and creed. Such attempt I regard as mischievous and injurious. I will not go over the ground which was discussed with resourcefulness of knowledge by "Candid Friend" and "Plain Truth" in combating this theory. Without committing myself to the whole of th

ing, I certainly agree with their conclusion. It seems to me to attempt an impossible task to shun politics even for the sake of self-amelioration. Government-made laws permeate every department of human life, even religion not excluded, and the friction caused thereby inevitably engenders politics. Once the spark is kindled, it can't be concealed behind the bush ; and to say that justice is on one side only *viz.*, the side of the Government, is to ascribe superhuman qualities to the governing body. The proverb "Raja karo so niyae" merely gives expression to the attitude of the oppressed, but does not mean that whatever is done by the Government is really right and just. The friction, therefore, wherever and whenever it be, must cause dissatisfaction, and it appears to me positively dangerous to try to smooth it by abandoning ourselves to resignation. Such proness to self-abnegation would more and more feed the hand that oppresses, and the result may be self annihilation ; discontent must therefore be felt and not suppressed whenever and wherever caused and by whom soever it is caused.

Starting with this provision as essential for existence and discarding self-abnegation as suicidal, the next step is how to express and give vent to feeling of political discontent. Here, again, some people are inclined to call a halt. Discontent may be felt, but being weak and helpless what is needed is to assume a sullen attitude and direct efforts to self-improvement. This theory finds favour with a great many. It has the merit of containing within itself essence of political germ and so far it is an improvement on the first theory, but its fault lies in excessive reliance on the potency of self-help and self-organisation. Self-help and self-reliance are very potent and essential factors in human development, and in some departments such as social, religious and even educational, I would not admit

to work out its own destiny. But the principle is only partially true when applied to redress of political wrong or progress on the political plane. The question would not at all arise where the community is self-governed. There the rulers and the ruled form one whole and mutual help means self-help. But the conditions are different where the rulers are alien. There, self-help, though useful up to a certain stage is impotent to carry the matter through. Here the need for seeking extraneous help does exist at any rate ordinarily. This theory threatened at one time to cause a split in the Congress camp and not improbably did cause the split. The advocates of the theory would discredit their opponents by calling them mendicants. Their scheme was to make no appeals to Government nor send any memorials, but to achieve political ascendancy without Government help. The theory is attractive in form as it appeals to self-pride but I, at any rate, am at a loss to understand how it will work out in practice. I am unable to understand how resolutions passed at meetings will redress the grievances unless it be intended—whether so addressed in form or not—that these should reach Government and induce it to take measures for redress. This is surely mendicancy whether we choose to call it so or not and whether we like the epithet or not. If beyond passing resolutions there are other methods of self-help which would secure political redress, these have not been disclosed and therefore do not fall within the purview of discussion. It is this theory again which breaks out here and there to oppose employment in Government service or social relations with Government officials or accepting honorary posts under Government or assisting Government measures of administration. Its principal weapon hitherto has been Swadeshi, and this I thoroughly agree to as a useful and needful and potent

rate in a comparative sense. It is presumed, erroneously in my estimation, that we are strong enough to bear political pressure and to redress or remove it without applying for relief. The fallacy of the position taken up is rendered absolutely self-evident by actual results. An attempt to boycott Government service and even honorary service failed miserably and, as I pointed out in a previous letter, even under most favourable conditions in Bengal itself—the most advanced of the provinces. Not only such boycott failed but people, speaking generally, are more anxious than ever to secure Government service and honour under Government. "Plain Truth" and "Candid Friend", who evidently are admirers of this theory may cry hoarse about self-advanced communities, but the facts are as they are, and it is sheer madness to try to turn the flow from ocean-side to hillward. Human nature may gradually be diverted into other channels but cannot be suddenly turned upside down unless there be a cataclysm. This looks like one of those calculations where people, when in lack of funds for public Institutions, begin to start Pice Funds and calculate that 20 crores would give a pice each and thus make lakhs. The theory under discussion occasionally takes another form, that of turning prayerfully heavenward against the oppression. Under strain of tyranny and being helpless the mind turns to the Redressor of all wrongs instead of applying to mundane authority for justice. This is the lesson which I believe is inculcated by Dhruva's story published in this paper early in March of this year. The same was at one time impressed upon a poor Brahman by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The story is that on one occasion Jamadar Khushal Singh, when building his big mansion in the city of the Golden Temple, wanted to include in the building the house of a poor Brahman who was not willing to part with his cottage and objected to the high-handed proceedings of the Sardar.

But his laments proved of no avail and finding himself helpless, the mendicant Brahman appealed ultimately to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who, according to the tradition, did not feel strong enough to overrule the powerful minister and in despair advised the Brahman to pray to Wahguru. The Brahman did pray to Wahguru with what result is recited in every history.

But this is a matter entirely outside human calculations. The theory so far touches a ground which is sacred and delicate and is outside the range of political discussion. Leaving aside this phase of the theory, therefore for a moment and looking at it from the point of view of human politics, it appears to me faulty and partial as underestimating comparative weakness and placing excessive faith on expectation and hope for self-sacrifice. It entirely overlooks the crucial circumstance that if the friction which ex-hypothesis must exist will produce discontent on one side and irritation on the other, there is danger of being overborne altogether. It seems to me, therefore, incumbent that while dissatisfaction under injustice or oppression must be felt and not suppressed or white washed, it must lead not to mere self-examination, self-amelioration, and self-improvement, but also to a desire for appeal to the authorities that be to redress the wrong. This was the foundation of the Congress agitation as started originally, and indeed it has held sway and still holds sway with a large section of the community. *My objections against Congress however, are of a different hue. In the first place—and this is the strongest and most serious objection—the Congress proceeded on a wrong assumption*

for the distasteful work from the Government point of view, and when the time came for rewarding the labours a little, the substantial portion of the reward was assigned to the other community. Not only this, but they were given a political importance which they never possessed before, while Hindus were lowered in the scale from the position which they had already occupied. And with all these events passing before their eyes, the Congress through its mouthpiece the Indian Congress Committee moved not a little finger to render support or help to the Hindu cause. Nay, it did not even condescend to give an encouragement to the community in the struggle. On the other hand, its main exponent tried to gag the Hindu mouth against even raising a lament. A movement is judged by its results, just as a tree by its fruit. A tree, however, bright and beautiful in form and figure, yet if it bears bitter or poisonous fruit will be shunned and avoided. The Congress may possess very high ideas of a United India, admirable to look at from a distance, but if the result be bitter I cannot conceive how a Hindu, who has the least spark left in him of warmth of Hindu feeling and patriotism, can help and join the movement. And it will be noted that the matter has not come altogether by surprise. The Mohammadans from the very commencement would not join and the attempt to hoodwink failed miserably, as was pointed out forcibly, by Bakhshi Tek Chand in his letter on the subject. The Government would not recognise any such united demand as true in fact, and yet the Hindus in the Congress persisted in pressing it and deceiving none but themselves. It is, therefore, time now that they should undeceive themselves. Even apart from the question of political loss or

*making him break with all his past traditions and past glory. I regard this as a very heavy price to pay. The conversion to the new ideal means worse than the effects of foreign invasions that have hitherto hammered the Hindu community. During these times in spite of very oppressive circumstances, the Hindus have maintained intact their communal organisation, and why they should now voluntarily surrender and abandon the same passes my comprehension. Moreover, the other community has steadfastly refused to join hands, and under the circumstances it appears to me to be pure imbecility and cowardliness to appear under a united flag. The idea, therefore, set up by the Congress was not only erroneous to start with, but it has become impossible under the declared hostile attitude of the other community. The only possible, nay honourable, course under the circumstances in fact is to start anew on a fresh basis, abandoning, if not pulling down, the fabric which instead of giving political shelter and refuge has exposed the community to winds and hailstorms from every quarter.*

In the next place, and here my objection is not less strenuous, the Congress in its work for political agitation overshot the mark. As I stated in a previous letter, the Congress made and began to make impossible demands. This has been indignantly repudiated by "Plain Truth" and "Candid Friend." They regard the demands made as the lowest possible. Here we differ. As I pointed out at the time, the demands were not bad from the point of view of the subordinate community. This is what I said then, "I do not again say it is bad. If such peaceful revolution



from this point of view I still say that the demands made were impossible. I now further add with all due deference to my critics that the demands were impertinent, at least some of them. Take for example the demand to abolish the Council of the Secretary of State for India. What right have the people of this country to ask for this abolition? Nay, we may as well ask that the form of Government in the British Isles ought to be republican and not a limited monarchy. I consider this as a demand impossible to concede at the request of the people of this country and for their sake. The people in England may introduce changes in their mode of Government as it may suit them but this is a matter beyond the range of political agitation in this country, as I understand it.

Take again the demand not to annex Burmah. I cannot conceive of any reasonable ground on which we could legitimately make such a demand. If we were moved by humanitarian sentiments, we ought to have begun at home and asked the Government to annul the annexation of India and clear out bag and baggage.

I regard this as an impossible demand and equally the demands which mean as much. I would request "Plain Truth" and "Candid Friend" to note down in their notebooks the latest utterances in the Press Conference. Take again the demand for reduction of military expenditure, repealing the Arms Act, or to appoint a Committee of appeal over the head of the executive. And I am simply moved to a smile when I read the demand asking the British tax-payer to contribute for the Frontier expedition and to extend British guarantee for the Indian debt. And to prove that these were impossible demands I have only to refer to the actual course of events. In each case instead of yielding or conceding the demand, the burden has only been increased. Military expenditure has increased by leaps and bounds, the Arms Act is now more rigid

rously enforced, and Military contribution by India has been added to by forty-five lakhs. Some of these matters doubtless press heavily on India, but the remedy lies not in asking what will never be granted and which only proves a source of irritation, but in tackling with the source which feeds these demands by taxation. This is a legitimate point for the people of this country to raise and there is just a chance, a bare chance, of making a favourable impression. However, there is no doubt in my mind that the demands made were impossible and did prove a source of irritation. This again is stoutly denied, but in proof I have only to refer to the short history of the Reform Scheme Movement given by Lord Macdonell. Even conceding that the Congress was originally started under Government benedictions, as is stated, the Congress soon after assumed an attitude and an attribute which was suspected at an early stage, and this is enough for my argument.

Continuing my objections against the Congress, take again the latest phase of development which the Congress has under gone, what now forms in fact the bed-rock of Congress work, *viz.*, the demand for Colonial form of Government. This I regard as an impracticable demand and a pure source of irritation. It looks to me futile and the height of absurdity to claim by *petitions and resolutions*, to be placed on the same footing with self-governing Colonies. Swarajya is claimed and interpreted by supporters of the Congress to mean complete self-independence with British suzerainty to protect the country against foreign invasion. Is there least chance of any such concession being ever *voluntarily* granted? Facts do not support the analogy sought to be applied and it is wholly fallacious. There may and do exist springs of action for the British people for protecting members of their own community against foreign attacks wherever such members be, whether they be isolated individuals in the Siamese territory or form a Colony in Australia. But where would exist the same motive, the same patriotic impulse for extending the protection to a wholly different race for whom the feeling, if at all, may be even one of contempt? I do not hold brief for the Government, but in order to judge rightly whether a certain demand is practicable or the reverse, it is absolutely essential to put one's self in the position of the donor and to look at the matter also from his point of view. When we ask another party to make a grant it is surely not irrelevant to see how far the grant will touch the pocket of the granter. And looking at the matter from that point of view the most recent position taken by the Congress when driven to a corner is again an impossible posi-

Government will ever yield the demand made. They are not going to have the play of Hamlet without Hamlet, an Empire with its "brightest jewel" virtually gone. If the matters ever come to such a pass the British Government will clear out bag and baggage. There is no such intermediate stage as is demanded. If the Government becomes weak or people strong to yield or force such demand the cord which connects the two together will be torn asunder. Look at the present nervousness of European population in this country and is it conceivable that the British Government will tarry a minute when matters come to such a pass? It seems to me therefore simply silly to constitute this demand, as the basis for constitutional agitation ought to be both practicable and not one which defeats its very aim. Government has not hesitated to declare candidly against the demand, and if the demand were pressed by isolated individuals here and there it might not matter much. But the question assumes a graver aspect when it forms the deliberate programme of a body assembled in solemn conclave. Then it cannot be ignored and must be either granted or thwarted and defeated. The result of this present attitude of the Congress obviously therefore is to needlessly array the Government in opposition and to irritate it against the community which practically is responsible for agitating for the demand.

Overlooking, therefore, minor strictures against the Congress which are not few, the theory of political relief which habitates itself in the Congress agitation is obnoxious to certain vital and cardinal objections. The basal premises of a united nation is fallacious and wrecked already. The fundamental demand for Colonial form of Government is chimerical and impracticable, while the Hindu community which principally leads the propaganda has abjured and neglected its own work and in-

to a hostile attitude by the powers that be and adverse attacks by an irreconcilable community. Failing to justify the Congress by its results and methods, the supporters of this propaganda have now sought refuge in *argumentum ad hominem*. It is argued with great pathos and show of zeal that by abandoning the Congress you part company with A. B. C. and would repudiate the authority of C. D. E.

The reply is we have great regard and respect for C. D. E. and wish to live on amity with A. B. C. But we ought to have greater respect and regard and love for the interests of our own community, and when these suffer or are threatened to suffer we ought not to hesitate for a minute to repudiate authority or part company. *Weak and disunited we are and divided into various sects. But the remedy lies in bringing the sections on a common political platform where they would realise that they are merely branches of the same stock and community, and not to lead them further astray and to teach them as if no such community exists or has a political status.* Syed Ali Imam only once dared to stand on the same platform with the Hindus and he was subjected to an attack by his community, which virtually made him apologise. *Mild* we are but can't we have even one-hundredth of that feeling to call our renegades back and make them tread the right Hindu path? Authority has weight and is entitled to respect, but only so far as when on examination it is not found to be misleading. We have had enough of authority for a quarter of a century. It is time now for self-reflection and for critically examining the actual position.

It is argued again that we might mend the Congress or make it simply a Hindu Congress. Neither seems to me a possible plan. *Mending Congress on the lines - I*

it is urged that the Congress should abrogate the chimerical and unpracticable ideal or object which now forms the centre of its constitution. Any such objection would be dismissed *in limine*, in fact under the constitution as now framed it is a *sine qua non* of even admission to the pandal that the delegate should endorse and sign his belief in this ideal object. *Again it is impracticable to convert the present Congress into a Hindu Congress as that would mean not a mere change in the name but a change in the ideal. The difference, therefore, is not merely a difference of form or detail but a difference in root principle. If what I press is correct and true, then the position is wholly inconsistent with the existence of the Congress itself and necessarily means abandoning the same. The ideals are totally different and one must make his choice absolutely. A person who believes in the Indian ideal would subordinate the Hindu interests as of secondary importance, and this has actually happened in the conduct of the Congress leaders, at any rate of the most prominent Congress leaders, those who guide its propaganda. Whereas those who believe in the Hindu ideal must subordinate the Indian as of secondary significance and lend their support to it so far only as the ideal does not militate against the real Hindu interests. Taking therefore our start from the standpoint I urge, our line of conduct is perfectly clear. We must organise political associations with the sole object of strengthening and advocating Hindu interests whether these be special or common. I have pointed out that I am opposed to the theory which would suppress discontent and reduce our energies to mere self-amelioration. I also believe that dissatisfaction must not be suppressed but should be felt and, thirdly, it must not only be felt but measures taken for seeking redress. As I am opposed on the one hand*

equally opposed to the theory which would seek to obtain political redress by mere self-help. This I have shown in my last letter as impracticable under the present circumstances. The conclusion, therefore, is that we must seek redress for grievances likewise at the hands of the Government but solely and purely from the Hindu point of view. This is a very essential condition, as essential as seeking redress itself.

Such ought to have been our aim and object from the very start, but anyhow we are now clearly driven to that position. The Mohammadan community is taking vigorous measures to assert and constitute its independent existence. It is our duty to do the same for Hindus. This is not a new matter nor a new challenge.

An educational Institution was started at Aligarh, in early seventies, for purely Mohammadan interests but disguised to secure Hindu help as long as it was required. Help was secured and Hindus aided the Institution with funds for building hostel rooms and other matters, but ultimately members of their community were excluded therefrom. In time the disguise was altogether thrown aside and the Institution became a pure Muhammadan centre for strengthening communal interests and spreading party bias and spirit against the Hindus. In early eighties an educational Institution was established in the capital of this Province by the Hindus to meet their communal requirements. *Hindu society is weak, disunited and divided, but it is not lost of all vitality nor so eaten up by selfishness as some people seem to imagine. It throws out defensive works according as there be the need of the occasion. It gave rise to Sikhism to cope with the bigoted Moslem and it produced the Arya Samaj to meet the intellectual missionary on his own ground. It established a D.A.-V. College to meet its own needs and I have no doubt*

*Congress or no Congress will organise Hindu Sabhas to safe-guard its interests against the Moslem League. The Sabhas are yet weak and few, their policies are vacillating, but the sentiment, the Hindu sentiment, is making inroads. It asserted itself forcibly on a recent occasion, and I believe when the occasion again arises it will reassert itself.*

The policy of the Sabhas ought to be to protest emphatically but respectfully. In this connection we ought to utilise this experience gained in the Congress. The range of subjects ought to be wide. No doubt we ought, in the first instance, to advocate matters which purely concern Hindus, but it is unnecessary to stop there. We might as well take up mixed subjects, *i.e.*, matters which concern the whole Indian community, but judge them primarily from the Hindu point of view. As an instance, I referred to the Frontier policy. The Congress advocated withdrawal of regular troops and decrease in the military expenditure. The result was that the Hindus could not be adequately protected. Take, again, the separation of the Judicial and Executive. This is a matter which concerns both Hindus and Mohammadans, but we might press it. *My own belief is that if we succeed in establishing strong independent Hindu organisations, the Moslems would in course of time join us in making common demand for redress of common grievances.* But the difference in the method which prevails at present and which I advocate is that our grievances when even general ought to be within legitimate and reasonable bounds. There is no use in frittering away our energies on mere chimerical ideas impracticable to attain at present. These must be left for future. And we ought to concentrate our energies in pressing for redress where the grievances affect us most vitally. Subject to these conditions the range of subjects might be both special as well as general. There



the Hindu community at the present moment *viz.*, the want of qualified leaders. Leaders that are and that have been have one failing or another. Either they do not possess the nerve needful for a leader or have excess of it or they are too much self-engrossed or are unreliable or careless and negligent of communal interest. Any of these defects is a disqualification, and if there are others who possess the needed qualifications they have not yet come on the surface and have not gained position so as to command influence and hearing, and this itself is a disqualification. The remedy under the circumstances lies in vesting principal authority in the organisation but without wholly dispensing with the aid of persons who command more or less influence. The attempt ought to be to check their vagaries and spirit of self-aggrandisement so far as it militates against the interests of the community but not to throw them overboard or to discredit them altogether. Otherwise the attempt is not likely to succeed. An organisation is in a position to memorialise and press petitions for redress of grievances, but it will add to its usefulness and efficacy if it is able to supplement its representation by conferences through persons who carry weight and influence with the Government.

*There is one other method which ought to be adopted simultaneously, and that is securing the aid of Press devoted solely to Hindu cause. As I have complained in previous letters, the Hindu press at present is Congress-ridden and is hesitant to represent special Hindu grievances. This is a very serious disadvantage and the remedy here at any rate lies entirely in our own hands. As we avoid the Congress because it does not give precedence to Hindu cause we ought to shun the Press which fed with Hindu contributions and Hindu money will yet hesitate to call a spade a spade and will fall back when called.*

*upon to advocate Hindu interests. Why not apply the boycott here effectively and the result will soon be apparent.* Under the present conditions of political contest an organisation unsupported by Press is only one-legged. This is a truth which was realised by our Mohammedan friends and they have remedied the defect. They have an organ whose principal object from issue to issue is to give voice and precedence to Mohammedan claims and interests. We are in this respect in a much more effective position only if we knowingly do not cripple our own resources by insensate cries for Indian ideals and Colonial form of Government. Against one Mohammadan English organ we have a dozen, but those are of no use, in fact actually harmful, if they do not adopt Hindu cause as the chief plank of their policy, leaving the Indian to follow in due course. The same remark applies to the Vernacular Press. Here the Mohammadans are not behind in numbers, but if I mistake not their Press exists exclusively for representing Muslim interests while the Hindu Vernacular Press taking its cue from the English is again simply wedded to Congress cause and not unoften indulges in general platitudes. Here then lies a remedy entirely in our own hands and the principle of self-help ought to have the fullest play but which we do not utilise to the fullest purpose for our own benefit.

Further, the organisation, by whatever name it is called, ought to be more effective in its machinery and here I entirely endorse the suggestion made some time ago by a correspondent in your paper. We ought to have regular establishment to collate information on matters affecting the Hindu society. This is a very necessary *sine qua non* and the present arrangement, though effective so far as

of Hindu interest. There would be some difficulty in regulating the relations *inter se* between the local and provincial Institutions, but the difficulty is not insuperable. As in the case of other organisations not excluding Government a certain percentage might be devoted to local matters and the balance for the provincial.

One other matter I ought not to refrain from mentioning in connection with the organisation, and that in my opinion is a very essential matter of principle. We ought to have the organisation for collecting and receiving information, but the organisation ought to exist for eliciting and not for creating grievances. This is a matter which we are likely to overlook but which in my humble estimation is essential for success. If we begin to create grievances the result would be the same as in the case of the Congress. In the first place any such procedure will involve sullen hostility by the official, and as the matter grows, which naturally it would, the sullen attitude would be converted into active hostility with the result that pressure would be laid to break up the organisation. To draw the line between eliciting grievances and creating them is difficult but not an impossible task. We ought to maintain the distinction as far as it may be in our action and our course of conduct.

If in spite of all these precautions we fail or evolve hostility which appears to be unlikely, there will at any rate be no cause for repentance. We owe a duty to our community which we perform and if the performance does not bear the needed fruit we will at any rate have the satisfaction of having performed our duty. Such satisfaction cannot in my opinion be predicated of our present political propaganda which not only did not proceed on Hindu lines but tended ever to obliterate them.

This then shortly is the plan I advocate and the course I propose to adopt:—the substitution of Hindu Sabhas for Congress Committees, of a Hindu Press for the Congress Press, organisation of a Hindu Defence Fund with regular office and machinery for collecting information and seeking redress by self-help, self-ameliorations and petitions and memorials supplemented by agitation in the Press and advocacy through trusted leaders in matters both special and common but dominated primarily by regard for Hindu interests. In other words, there ought to be political agitation conducted in the interests of purely Hindu cause within reasonable and legitimate and practicable bounds, avoiding all claims such as are purely visionary or affect the distant future and at present prove merely a source of friction and irritation such as is needlessly offensive. Our aim ought to be to ameliorate our present condition and the condition in the near future and not to arrogate to ourselves the task that belongs to distant future and all future times. We have no right to define the work for future generations when we do not know and can not say what will suit them or not. All such attempt is, therefore, a mere waste of energy that may better be utilised otherwise.

It will be seen that the work, I propose, is not merely destructive but also constructive. I have striven a great deal by presenting copious illustrations to clear the ground for the constructive work I advocate and this seemed to be essential. I do not claim entire freedom from error nor expect unanimity of opinion on all points. But I claim having called attention to an *urgent* matter and I believe I have a good deal succeeded so far. I have at any rate

to discuss theories. Ideas are the soul of action, and unless these change action is not possible. I believe the attempt made here is not vain and to emphasise it further I willingly accept the suggestion to reprint the letters in a pamphlet form. My only wish is these might be widely read and circulated and for the rest I can rely upon the materials to do work. I must stop now, and even if I were willing to go on, the oppressive heat renders the task impossible. We, however, soon expect to be in the midst of refreshing rains and we may hope for showers of grace for the parched-up Hindu community such as will rejuvenate and reinvigorate its shrivelled limbs and organism. With this hope and wish I take leave to retire to my wonted calm away from the ruffled atmosphere of heated controversy in the Press.

FINIS.

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Those who feel interested in the movement—expressed in the foregoing pages and are desirous of joining the C. H. Y. S., Lahore should communicate at the following address :—





In my last letter I referred to another phase of Self-Abnegation of the Hindus as displayed in the study of the Persian language by them to the exclusion of Sanskrit. When I declared against the study of Persian, I did so not because I had any bigotted prejudices against it, nor because I was not conscious of its fluent rhythm and sweet flow. My crusade is not based on hatred against a foreign language, but on grounds of self-respect and self-preservation. Persian may be studied as a language, by the few who wish to devote themselves to a comparative study of languages, or by those who for the sake of religious culture wish to know what is contained in the religious literature of other nations. It may also be studied by those who wish occasionally to pass their time or recreate their idle hours by a dip into the thoughts of classical writers wherever these may be found. What I object to most emphatically and strongly is that it should form part of the ordinary curriculum of studies for Hindu lads receiving education in Schools and Colleges. The consequence is that thousands and tens of thousands of Hindus who ought to be familiar with the truths of the Upanishads and Bhagavat Gita and the equally valuable teachings of Manu are irretrievably committed to a knowledge of foreign dogmas and foreign doctrines.

And it is most amusing, to say the least of it, when one hears a Kashmiri Pandit quoting Khafi Khan for his authority when he ought to be able to cite Kalidas. This is a most deplorable condition of affairs. And contrast it with the attitude of the Mohammadans. The bigotry which destroyed by fire the famous Library of Alexandria has not yet left the Muslim mind. He is by inclination averse to learn a language not associated with his own

religion. He avoided in the beginning, through prejudice the acquisition of the English language. But self-interest has prevailed at last, and he has taken to learn it as a sheer necessity because he felt he was otherwise being left behind. His attitude, however, towards Sanskrit continues to be unbending. *You will not find a single Muhammadan student in the whole Province, even in the Government institutions, who has taken up Sanskrit as a second language for study or subject of examination. And in his own institution, the Islamia School and College, the exclusion is a matter of course. And this irreconcilable and unbending attitude is answered by the Hindus. by flocking in thousands to learn Persian, not simply in Aided and Government institutions but even in their own pet D.A.-V. This last boast of being a "Hindu National institution" and yet Persian formed a part of its curriculum in the School Department up to recent times, and occupies still the attention of the majority of its students in the College. The Managing Committee has agreed to strike off Persian from the School course under heavy pressure. The resolution was carried with great difficulty and by a majority, but the embers are still smouldering and threaten any moment to burst forth into a flame. Statistics are gathered to show the loss in income and numbers as if in a question of great principle such loss can mean anything. Ointments are good curatives when the sore is only skin deep, but for a cancer the knife must be applied to the very root to eradicate the poison. It appears to me that if we had any sense or feeling, the matter required neither arguments nor discussion.*

assert our own position and let the Government know what we want, I cannot for a moment believe that if the inhabitants of a particular town would apply to the Government to engage teachers to teach Sanskrit the Government would refuse the prayer. And even if it were to refuse, it would not be at all a difficult matter to subscribe Rs 30 per month and pay the same to the Government for engaging a Sanskrit teacher in the School. What is wanted is that the Hindu mind should free itself from the predilection for Persian which doubtless has been ingrained in its constitution in course of time and should resolve to teach Sanskrit to Hindu youths. It is not improbable that if a Muhammadan boy were to commence to read Sanskrit, he would at once be interdicted by his co-religionists as having become a Kafir. Even Muhammadan gentlemen who mix more familiarly with the Hindus are not safe from such denunciations. I do not say we ought to possess ourselves with the same spirit of bigotry. But at least *the dictates of self-respect and self-preservation require that we should not abandon in sheer neglect our sacred lore and heritage and run after Khazkonis and Firdousis.* The writer of these lines has often deplored his fate in not being able to read and understand Sanskrit works in original, and he is convinced the same anguish will tease many a mind now receiving education in our schools when it will have grown up into adult life and finds need for literary recreation.

But while the Government stands quite impartial as regards encouraging the study of Sanskrit and Persian, and our failure here is no doubt due to a perverse desire of self-abnegation, the former cannot be absolved from all blame in the matter of the study and encouragement of Urdu. Urdu has been recognised as the Court language, and this patronage has given it a tremendous pull over its rivals, Hindi and Panjabee. I perfectly recognise that this recognition in its origin is purely due to an accident. As I pointed out in my

last letter, it was the result of bare necessity to import officials from the neighbouring Province to carry on the administration after the annexation. But that reason has now ceased to exist, and there is absolutely no justification for perpetuating the original error. Court language, if it has any sense and meaning, ought to mean the language of the litigant. This principle has been recognised throughout the country in other provinces. It requires no demonstration and is self-evident. In Bengal the language of the litigating public is Bengali and so is the Court language, and the same remark applies to other Provinces, such as Bombay and Madras. Why not then follow this wholesome and sound principle in this Province like-wise? Urdu is not the language of the people here. It is not spoken even by Muhammadans. It may now be attempted to be enforced in certain Muhammadan families who have risen to position, but it is not the language of the agriculturist Muhammadans or of Hindus who are much in evidence in Courts. The major part of any records, judicial or revenue, is the statements made by the parties or their witnesses and these are never expressed in Urdu. Why than should they be interpreted by the Munshi in Urdu language and scribbled in characters which are as unfamiliar to the majority of the deponents as the English characters. It is a pure anomaly, but maintained in spite of its evils, in spite of its injustice, and in spite of its evident inconsistency. Here it is again that Hindus have failed to assert themselves and allowed their own interests to be overborne by a spirit of *laissez faire*. *For let it be remembered that language, next to religion, is one of the chief distinguishing features of a community. The Boers, even when vanquished and at the mercy of their conquerors, gave up arms but safeguarded their language by providing in the final settlement that it shall continue to be language of school education for their children. They were*